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'We are the servants of the people'

Blair lays down the law to his MPs

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

FOREIGN funding of political parties is to be banned as part of an anti-sleaze package to be announced in the Queen's speech next week.

The speech outlining the parliamentary programme, which will be approved by Tony Blair's first Cabinet meeting today, will also pave the way for the outlawing of cigarette advertising and up to other 20 measures ranging from education to devolution.

The reform of political funding, which will require the disclosure of all sums of more than £5,000, is an early strike at the Conservative Party, which is believed to receive millions from overseas.

But it was in keeping with the Prime Minister's almost austere message to his 418-strong contingent of MPs as they gathered at Westminster for the first time. He said they were not there to enjoy "the trappings of power" but to uphold the highest standards. Every one of them would be an ambassador for Labour and the Government, he said.

He welcomed them to the centre of power and government, but told them that they should remember that "we are not the masters". He was deliberately reversing Hartley Shawcross's infamous claim after the 1945 landslide "we are the masters... and not only for the moment, but for a very long time". The words came back to haunt him when Labour was defeated six years later, and yesterday the Prime Minister emphasised the point, declaring: "The people are the masters. We are the servants of the people. We will never forget that and, if we ever do, the people will very soon show that what the electorate gives, the electorate can take away." He was also determined to press home the warning that Labour MPs must never tread

The power steering team

Tony Blair has set up a strategy committee of half a dozen ministers to direct and plan the Government's programme (Peter Riddell writes).

This inner group, which may become more important than the full 22-strong Cabinet, will be centred on the "Big Four": Mr Blair, John Prescott, Gordon Brown, and Robin Cook. Other participants will be Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio in the Cabinet Office, Ann Taylor, Leader of the Commons, and Nick Brown, the Chief Whip. Mr Blair's senior advisers, Jonathan Powell and Alastair Campbell, will also attend. Page 2

the path of disunity and indiscipline followed by the Tories and that they must tailor their hopes and demands to the programme on which Labour fought and won the election.

Addressing them in Church House, Westminster, because there was no room big enough at the Commons, he said that provided they held true to the path he had set, there was the prospect of success for years to come. If so, Labour could do something quite special — "possibly spectacular" — for the future of the country.

Labour MPs should be free to speak their minds — and Dennis Skinner was one of a handful who later, when the meeting became private, criticised Gordon Brown's decision to allow the Bank of England to set interest rates — but they should not follow the road of revolt.

Where were all the Tory rebels now? "When the walls

came crashing down beneath the tidal wave of change, there was no discrimination between them. They were all swept away, rebels and loyalists alike. Of course speak your minds. But realise why you are here: you are here because of the Labour Party for which you fought.

"We have won a historic victory. Now the weight of history is upon our shoulders. Great is the excitement and hope in Britain today. Even greater is our sense of humility and responsibility in not disappointing those hopes."

It was a day of excitement and change at Westminster, with some 260 MPs entering the Commons for the first time. The Tories were trying to come to terms with sitting on the Opposition benches, and everyone appeared to be looking for new offices.

Mr Blair appeared at the prime ministerial Dispatch Box for the first time to congratulate Betty Boothroyd after her formal re-election as Speaker.

Mearns while John Major called his depleted former Cabinet team to the Shadow Cabinet room to discuss how to handle the business of Opposition. The seven Cabinet ministers who lost their seats will not be replaced until a new leader is chosen next month — Stephen Dorrell and William Hague yesterday joined the list of candidates. Instead, Mr Major will take on extra special responsibilities for foreign affairs and defence following the defeats of Malcolm Rifkind and Michael Portillo, while other former junior ministers will be drafted as necessary.

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Tony Blair on the steps of Church House, Westminster, yesterday with some of the 101 Labour women MPs

So much joy! So much hairspray!

By MATTHEW PARRIS

SO many purple suits! So much hairspray! The mood teetered between a fashionable charity premiere of a star-studded new show and the headmaster's First Day address to new boys and girls.

Or should we say new girls and boys? The pastel and primary colours of the hundred-odd women present turned their male counterparts into backdrops.

declared Tony Blair. Four hundred eager faces, gathered for this first prime ministerial address to the new Labour MPs, looked up in rapture. All ambassadors? Not in their

wildest dreams had they thought Cabinet patronage extended this far.

The occasion was staged at Church House whose circular hall permits journalists to peer over the rim, as into a goldfish bowl. In the bowl, 400 new MPs had milled around, waiting. Cries of "darling!" "well done!" and "I just can't believe it!" surfaced through the hubbub. Grunts and snuffles of a thousand little hugs and *mwah! mwah!* kisses rang downwards.

Somewhat removed from all this, Tony Benn sat near the back, sucking his cheeks. Dennis Skinner strode in, a man unchanged. In the same jacket, the same tie and the

same jaundiced expression he always wears. Skinner looked adrift: a castaway on a sea of bright eyes, expensive haircuts, Southern accents and soft suiting.

He marched up to the new Cabinet. He began shaking their hands. Had the Beast of Bolsover been tamed?

He had not. Skinner sat down in the seat kept empty for the Chancellor and stayed there, beaming. Everyone looked embarrassed. Jack Straw looked terrified. A hatchet-faced apartheidist herded him away to an outer circle, not far from Barbara Follett, power-dressed creator of New Labour Woman. The irony was delicious.

Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio (did ever so vacant a title belie so occupied a plot?) ambled palely down the aisle. When Mr Mandelson appears, something is about to happen. It was John Prescott was about to happen. Unable to suppress glee, the Deputy Prime Minister belted. Continued on page 2, col 1

Photograph, page 10

Big adventure, page 3

BP chief joins Government

Sir David Simon, one of Britain's top businessmen, has been made Minister for Trade and Competitiveness in Europe. The BP chairman was chosen by the Prime Minister who was keen to bring a business leader into his ministerial team.

Sir David, 57, will work with both Gordon Brown and Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade, to push forward Labour plans for the single market and spread flexible Labour markets in Europe. Page 2

Smokers lose ashes in the Long Room

By ADRIAN LEE

A CENTURY of tradition was extinguished at the home of cricket yesterday when smoking was banned in the Long Room at Lord's.

Since 1890, the world's finest players have emerged from the haze of the Long Room on their way from the dressing rooms to the hallowed pitch. But non-smokers in cricket's exclusive inner sanctum rebelled, claiming that during Test matches when up to 200 men stand shoulder to shoulder, the mix of cigarettes, pipes and cigars was overpowering. On cold days when the windows were closed, the fumes were unbearable.

Led by the Rev Malcolm Gingold, from Woolwich, south east London, the non-smokers yesterday won their battle against the ashes. A postal ballot of the MCC's 18,000 members — all men — produced a resounding vote against smoking.

The ban will take effect next month.

As they arrived for the club's annual meeting yesterday, opponents of a ban, argued that a good strong tobacco in a pipe is as English as well. Test match day at Lord's. Already,

a curious alliance appeared to be forming between the smoking lobby and those who have campaigned against the admission of women members. "The Long Room is like a pub or anywhere else men gather," said Philip Whiffin, 78, a retired insurance executive from Maidenhead. "I have never known it to be objectionable. The ceilings are very high. If someone wants to smoke, why the Hell not? There are already non smoking areas in the ground. Why should they change it any more than they should allow women members?"

"I don't smoke but I believe in the freedom to do so," said Ralph Phillips, 31. "Is the MCC going to become politically correct or remain something special. You don't even notice the smoke. The idea of marching someone out of the Long Room with their pipe is ridiculous."

As Mr Gingold spoke at yesterday's meeting there were jeers of "boring, boring" from his opponents. But there was evident support for a ban in the Long Room, from whence MCC members will now have a clearer view.



Six in fight for the Tory crown

The bid for the Tory leadership moved into top gear when former Welsh Secretary William Hague and former Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell entered the race.

Their declarations brought the number of contenders to six, including former Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke, 1995 leadership challenger John Redwood, former Home Secretary Michael Howard and former Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley.

Mr Lilley won the backing of former Education and Employment Secretary Gillian Shephard. Page 11

SBS marines held in £10m drug case

By MICHAEL EVANS AND STEWART TENDLER

A ROYAL MARINE attached to the Special Boat Service, the Navy's equivalent of the SAS, was arrested at the elite squad's headquarters yesterday and charged with taking part in a £10 million cannabis smuggling ring.

A second serving Marine attached to the SBS was being brought back to Britain under arrest after Customs officers, supported by armed marines, boarded a motor-vessel, the 280-ton *Simon de Danser*, 100 miles off Lisbon.

A former marine who had served with the SBS, a former commando and two former soldiers were also arrested.

Five men will appear in court before magistrates in Plymouth today.

The arrests come after a year's investigation by Customs officers and detectives across Europe, and it is the first time that serving special forces personnel have been linked to allegations of major drug trafficking.

The operation to board the motor-vessel is understood to have been carried out by SBS men, marines from 42 Commando and a Royal Navy frigate. Two other Britons, a

Frenchman and a Turk have also been arrested.

The SBS is an elite unit of about 200 men who are hand-picked to go on secret operations. Only 30 per cent of those selected for training complete the course.

They are trained to swim a long way under water, to navigate any type of craft, parachute, blow up bridges and use cameras that "the average civilian never sees".

One of the risky roles of the SBS is to be infiltrated ashore into enemy-occupied territory to carry out reconnaissance operations prior to an amphibious landing. The SBS played a significant role in the Falklands War in 1982.

In the Gulf War in 1991, SBS marines carried out sabotage operations behind Iraqi lines, including destroying crucial fibre optic communications cables linking Baghdad with the Iraqi forces in Kuwait.

In Operation Maud, RAF Chinook helicopters flew 40 SBS men to a spot 40 miles south of Baghdad. Using electronic detectors, they found the heavily insulated cables buried well below the surface, and blew them up.

Exclusive

Floppy Found Dead



For the full story turn to page 5.

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WPC Alice Collins

WPC hit by IRA sniper is back home

By NICHOLAS WATT

ALICE COLLINS, the police constable gravely injured after being shot in the back by an IRA sniper in Londonderry last month, was discharged from hospital yesterday.

Friends welcomed Mrs Collins, 46, as she returned to her home with her husband and three children. She underwent six hours of emergency surgery after the shooting on April 10.

Dr James McHaffey, the Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, who was a regular visitor to Mrs Collins's bedside at the Altnagelvin Hospital, said: "Mrs Collins is a woman of great and wonderful courage. She was determined to get better and she developed a wonderful spirit in hospital."

As Mrs Collins returned home yesterday, police in Londonderry arrested three men in connection with the shooting. IRA supporters sent a chilling warning on Tuesday night when they hijacked a van in Belfast and forced the driver to take it to Waterfront Hall, where the Prince of Wales was guest of honour at a gala concert. Soldiers carried out controlled explosions, but no bomb was found.

Girls' Own adventure ends after twins survive sea and sharks

Stowaway sisters hid for two months in tiny rope store

FROM BELINDA SCOTT IN CAIRNS AND ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY



Joanne Ingham: lived on crabs and rainwater

TEENAGE stowaways Sarah and Joanne Ingham hid for two months in a tiny store room on a container ship sailing from New Zealand to Singapore. The 18-year-old twins, wanted for minor offences at home, are believed to have been smuggled on board by crewmen they had befriended in Auckland.

Supplies of food and drink kept them safe in their forepeak refuge, used to store ropes, throughout the voyage to Singapore. But the secret passengers were discovered a day after the vessel left on the return voyage.

The captain ordered the girls to be kept locked in the cook's quarters. They were last seen at 10.30pm on Saturday, April 19, with a crewman, Jaafar bin Mohamed Zan. A few hours later the three jumped from the ship off the Australian coast between Lockhart River and Princess Charlotte Bay. They were reported missing the next day.

along with three lifejackets and four lifebuoys.

An air and sea search failed to find any trace of them, and all but the girls' parents had given the trio up for dead in the shark-infested waters off the Queensland coast. But yesterday it emerged that they had made it to shore after nearly 40 hours in the water.

They staggered on to a beach in isolated Princess Charlotte Bay, where they lived on crabs and oysters and drank rainwater for 17 days. Eventually they tried to make

their way to civilisation but became lost in the bush. One report said that they had stumbled across a group of Aborigines who took them to the nearest town, Coen, about 50 miles away.

The three appeared reluctant to return. The Malaysian seaman had to be physically detained by an official from the Aboriginal community to prevent him escaping into the bush.

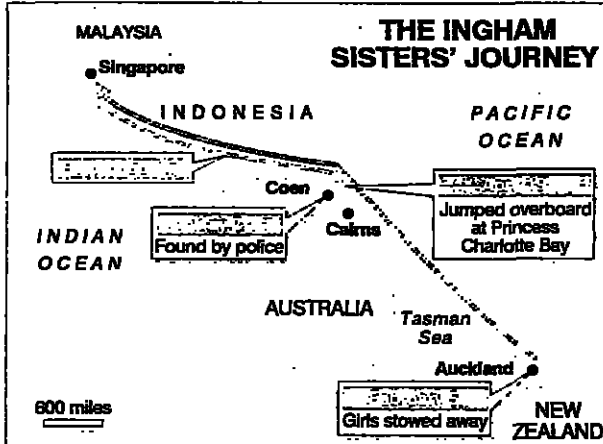
The girls, whose parents emigrated from Leeds to New Zealand in 1971, were being treated for severe sunburn yesterday and held under arrest. They are to be deported to New Zealand.

Sergeant John Moran said: "We are still trying to get to the bottom of all this, but it's a quite astonishing story of survival. It's amazing they didn't get eaten by a shark."

The twins' parents, Bernard and Jeanette, live in Kaiapoi, north of Christchurch. Mr Ingham, 53, said he had always been convinced that the twins were alive because they were so "independent and strong-willed".

"We still love them and we want them back," Mrs Ingham, also 53, said. Last night the couple were still waiting to talk to their daughters, who were undergoing treatment for sunburn and exposure at Cairns Hospital. Police and immigration officials were waiting to question the sisters further.

The girls did not live at home and had been working in Nelson, about four hours' drive from Christchurch, until their disappearance. "They did some silly things and had some funny ideas on things, but they were not bad people and weren't criminals," Mr Ingham said.



Sarah Ingham in Cairns yesterday after being found in the bush by Aborigines

Panorama put to flight by Essex girls

By CAROL MIDGLEY MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

PANORAMA, the BBC's flagship current affairs programme, is being moved from the prime-time slot it has occupied for 12 years to make way for the popular sitcom *Birds of a Feather*.

In an effort to "beef up" Monday night viewing, the BBC has decided to put a mass appeal show in the 9.30pm slot, directly after the *Nine O'Clock News*, to compete with ITV drama.

The comedy series, which focuses on the lives of two Essex girls Sharon and Tracey and stars Pauline Quirke and Linda Robson, is one of the most successful light entertainment shows on television.

Panorama, which has run since 1953, will start half an hour later at 10pm from June 2 to compete with ITV's *News at Ten*.

Programmers denied that the move was a demotion for *Panorama* or that it was losing viewers but was merely to "strengthen the overall mix" of the Monday night schedule. The programme last year averaged 4.3 million viewers a week and achieved a 20 per cent audience share.

Mark Thompson, controller of BBC2 and acting controller of BBC1, said: "We want to strengthen and broaden BBC's Monday night line-up. *Panorama* has a well-earned reputation for powerful and highly relevant journalism. Both it and the *Nine O'Clock News* should benefit from these changes."

Steve Hewlett, editor of *Panorama*, said: "Other factual programmes have done well when they have moved to this time. I see it as an opportunity for *Panorama* to reach a bigger share of the audience, many of whom currently switch over to watch us at 10pm having missed most of the programme."

Benn case man 'given choice of bribe or death'

By RICHARD DUCE

RAYMOND SULLIVAN was offered the choice of accepting £100,000 to drop assault charges against the boxer Nigel Benn or becoming the target of a contract killer, a jury was told yesterday.

Mr Sullivan, a former close friend of the boxer, said the offer was made two weeks before Mr Benn's trial began on Tuesday at Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court.

Mr Sullivan, 33, from east London, is the main prosecution witness against Mr Benn, who is alleged to have carried out an unprovoked attack on him with a glass ashtray at a Mayfair nightclub in September. Mr Sullivan needed 105 stitches to his nose, which he described as being split open "like a pair of curtains".

Trevor Burke, for the defence, asked Mr Sullivan if he had let it be known that he was prepared to drop charges against the boxer if he was paid £100,000. Mr Sullivan, who runs a rickety sales business, told the jury that the claim was ridiculous. He said: "Someone suggested to me I could get £100,000 if I were to drop the charges. If not, a person would take a contract out on my life."

He denied trying to frame Mr Benn for the attack by persuading witnesses to come forward once he had failed in a civil action to claim £50,000 damages from Mr Benn for his injuries.

Mr Sullivan said he had known Mr Benn for ten years and the pair had once been "like brothers". But they fell out after Mr Benn discovered Mr Sullivan had tried to "chat up" the boxer's girlfriend. "He hated me, I suppose," said Mr

Sullivan. Mr Burke suggested the men had fallen out because Mr Sullivan was convicted of drugs dealing and Mr Benn did not approve.

The court was told that Mr Sullivan had informed police of the death threat and that Mr Benn had been questioned about the alleged £20,000 contract. Mr Sullivan denied he had made up a version of events at Legends Night Club in an attempt to extract money from Mr Benn as he prepared for a world title fight last November.

Under cross-examination from Trevor Burke, for Mr Benn, Mr Sullivan said he arranged for photographs of his injuries to be taken by the surgeon who stitched his nose. Through an agent, Mr Sullivan sold the photographs for £10,000 to *The Sun*, which carried a front page article with the headline "Benn did this to me".

Mr Sullivan said: "All I wanted to do was get a picture in the paper because everyone was denying it [the assault]. I just wanted people to know what he had done to me. I was frightened. Had he won [the world title fight], the implications would have been magnified."

Mr Sullivan admitted that, although he told police that he had not seen who attacked him, he had initiated a civil action against Mr Benn in an attempt to get £50,000 compensation for his injuries.

Mr Benn from Beckenham, Kent, denies wounding Mr Sullivan with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. He also denies a lesser alternative charge of unlawful wounding. The case continues today.

Detention for 17st boy who led rape of tourist

By LIN JENKINS

THE 17-stone ringleader of a teenage gang that raped an Austrian tourist and threw her into a canal to drown after an hour-long attack was sentenced to 12 years detention yesterday.

Adrian Henry, 14, was the last of seven gang members to be jailed for the attack on the banks of a canal in King's Cross, London. Judge Verne's Recorder of London, told Henry that he had shown his victim no mercy and he could expect none to be shown to him.

After sentencing, Detective Sergeant Keith Manktelow, who led the inquiry, said he recognised the danger Henry posed. "That boy is going to be a serial something," he said. It emerged that Henry had been beyond the control of his mother and social workers and had broken curfew from a children's home on the night of the attack.

Henry, who is 6ft 2in and called Congo by gang members, showed no emotion as he was sentenced at the Old Bailey. He sauntered casually from the court as he began his journey to Glenhorne Young Offenders' Institute.

The judge was it was particularly worrying that Henry, who had changed his plea to guilty only as the trial was due to start, had no realisation of the awfulness of what he had done but maintained the first act of intercourse was with consent. "Having heard her evidence I am absolutely certain that what you did was rape and that you were the first to do it."

He said Henry chanted: "Now the party is going to start," as the 32-year-old mother-of-two was dragged to a canal side, lifted up and stripped. "How you can possi-

bly imagine, if you do, that a woman who has been so treated was agreeing to have sexual intercourse with you is beyond understanding."

Henry, born in Britain of Afro-Caribbean parents, was in the care of Islington social services, living in a children's home and on bail for mugging offences when he took part in the rape. At Beatrice House, the privately run children's home in Finsbury Park where he had been placed five months earlier, records show he repeatedly arrived back as late as Sam.

Police had cautioned him for his first offence of carrying an offensive weapon. When he was on remand in secure accommodation awaiting trial for three street robberies he set

fire to his room. His mother, a former nursery nurse, lost control of him after her marriage to a rail worker collapsed eight years ago and she developed multiple sclerosis.

Henry was once a promising basketball player but now, in the view of police and social workers, he was out of control and destined for a life in the penal system.

The other gang members were sentenced on April 18 to between 10 and 12 years for their part in the attack. Six pleaded guilty and one, the youngest, was convicted after a trial in which the victim travelled to England to give evidence.

Her former husband was in court yesterday for the sentencing. He has blamed his reaction to the rape for their divorce although his wife said it was the final straw in their collapse of their relationship. Michael Cogan, for the defence, said Henry lived in a fantasy world, struggling to live up to the image created by his large size at such a young age. He said he idolised the father who had left his mother eight years ago.

The judge ordered that Henry remain under supervision for the whole period of the sentence. He also lifted an order banning identification of two of the three of those previously sentenced because a pending trial for robbing a tourist at knifepoint was not going to continue. The third youth still faced other charges.

They were Calville Angol, 18, the eldest of the gang. He had been sentenced to 11 years. The other was Timothy Davies, 17, who lived in Clerkenwell with his Venezuelan mother and sister. He was sentenced to 11 years.



Henry: destined to be a "serial something"

Suicide woman's threat to rescuers

By TIM JONES

A FORMER headmistress who killed herself because of failing health left a note threatening to sue anyone who successfully revived her.

Gertrude Haynes, 81, an inquest was told, hung the note around her neck before taking an overdose of sleeping pills and placing a bag over her head. But in spite of her final request, Eugene Clancy, a paramedic, battled in vain to save her life. His failed attempt to resuscitate Miss Haynes was praised by Dr Richard Whittington, the Birmingham city coroner.

He said such notices should not prevent medical staff seeking to revive people who had attempted suicide.

Miss Haynes, whose body was found at her bungalow in Bourneville, had always promised to take her own life if her health began to fail, the inquest was told. A copy of *The Final Edit*, which details ways in which people can end their lives, was found in her home.

Her friend, Deirdre Farthing, said Miss Haynes had become frustrated at getting tired. "She made no secret of wanting to end her life if her health failed." But Miss Haynes had remained active and kept a clean, well ordered house and enjoyed gardening.

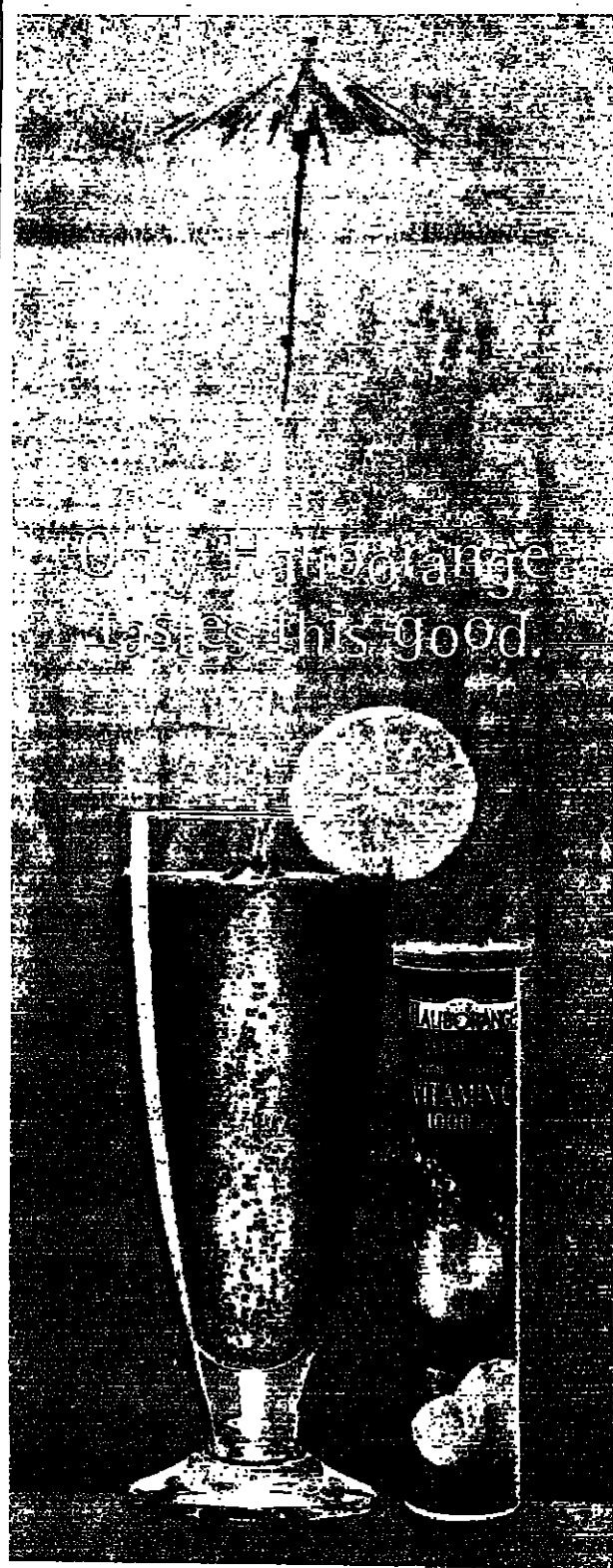
Before her death, Miss Haynes was a well known figure at the local museum, where her books on growing up in Birmingham, written as Lita Haynes, were sold.

Dr Whittington said Miss Haynes had demonstrated a long and clear intention to take her own life in certain circumstances. "She was determined to maintain her standards but this was becoming too much for her."

But people who believed they could prevent treatment by putting notices around themselves were wrong.

After the verdict of suicide, Meredith MacArdale, of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society, said that seriously ill people had the right to reject medicines designed simply to keep them alive.

Steve Evans, of the West Midlands Ambulance Service, said: "If a conscious person makes a specific request not to have medical assistance then we have to acknowledge that request. But if someone is unconscious then the paramedics will do what they are trained to do and save lives."



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HALIBORANGE

Cambridge club disbanded after drunken spree

By DAVID CHARTER EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

A COLLEGE club at Cambridge University has been disbanded in disgrace after its annual dinner descended into drunken excess.

The all-male Griffins club, which was founded to celebrate sporting excellence, may be allowed to re-form only if women are admitted to membership, to help curb further "blokey" excesses.

The club for sportsmen at Downing College was banned after members were thrown out of the Royal Cambridge Hotel. They were accused of

harassing female staff, throwing food, and vomiting on the table after drinking bottles of wine at one go.

One postgraduate was sent down, a student was rusticated for a year, and the other members have been asked to leave their rooms in the college.

Professor David King, Master of the college, said: "The gentlemen-only concept dates back from a time when all-male colleges existed, but I feel that the club should reflect the present situation. The Griffins not only excluded women, they've excluded sportsmen of their own choosing."

Jon Dymond, student president of Downing College, said: "It will be re-

established to fulfil the original spirit of the Griffins which was to recognise sporting excellence. The idea is to get away from this blokey, beer-swilling image and put it back to the way it was supposed to be. That sort of behaviour was unacceptable to the college."

Mr Dymond, who is the captain of another college drinking society, blamed the presence of old boys for the bad behaviour. "The punishments were severe but those responsible did a lot of damage," he said.

It cost the Royal Cambridge Hotel about £750 to clean the carpet, the curtains and wash the tablecloths. A hotel employee told *Varsity*, the stu-

dent newspaper, that one member of staff had to have his suit replaced.

The Griffins club dates back to the turn of the century. Downing has a strong reputation as a sporting college and by tradition the election to membership involved having achieved some sporting success, usually at rugby, rowing or football. But in recent years, membership, while essentially sporting, has become wider.

Some students were said to have behaved properly at the hotel but the Downing College disciplinary committee later interviewed the 19 undergraduates present and punished them all.

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High-tech angling is banned as too fishy

By STEWART TENDLER AND AUDREY MAGES

ANGLERS have been banned from using high-tech fish-finders after a competitor in a fishing match was discovered sitting on a river bank with a miniature echo-sounder by his side.

Roger Mortimer netted 374 roach, perch and bream using the device, which dangled from a pole into the water in front of his seat. A display by his side alerted him to the movements of quarry in the River Glen in Lincolnshire and Mr Mortimer cast his bait among them.

The technique won him fourth place and £60 in a local competition, but the National Angling Federation and the Angling Times, which run the majority of coarse fishing competitions in this country, have since banned such devices.

The National Park in Killarney, Co Kerry, has also banned the equipment for unfairly tracking down half a million brown trout and salmon in three lakes. Fishing experts forecast that many other stillwater owners in Britain will follow suit, amid concern that fish stocks will be rapidly depleted if the fish-finding equipment becomes more popular.

The best equipment, which costs more than £350, can report not only the presence of fish but their depth and weight. Specimen hunters searching for wild brown

trout in the deep Scottish lochs have used the fish-finders to catch monsters of more than 10lb.

In Ireland, Chris Flynn, assistant director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, said that the ban on fish-finders was necessary to protect the lakes from over-fishing. He said: "Fishermen have to compete equally with nature if the fish are going to last."

Local fishermen using Lough Leane, Muckross Lake and the Upper Lake in the park welcomed the ban on fish-finders. Michael Hegarty, vice-chairman of Lough Leane Anglers, said: "There is no thrill in their methods, which are very unfair. Most of us go out purely for relaxation and if we catch a few trout, it's a bonus."

However, Gowen & Bradshaw, a Galway company supplying fish-finders to salmon and trout fishermen in the west of Ireland, claimed that the device did little to improve the catch. A spokesman said it helped fishermen to understand the terrain and learn about fish. "It is like having a compass on a hill - it helps you but it won't get you there. You still have to get the fish to open their mouths."

"How are you going to do that with a fish-finder? Lean out the boat and say 'Aah'? You still have to do all the hard work."



Sheep in the snow at Hebden Bridge, west Yorkshire, search for better grazing yesterday. Farmers said that lambs could be at risk if the cold and snow continued (Michael Hornsby writes). After April's warmth and last week's heat, the cold snap has wrecked hopes of a bumper strawberry crop and blasted

Winter's return hits strawberry crop

plants and flowers lured into early bloom. Sub-zero temperatures were recorded in central and southern England on Tuesday night after sleet that day. The London Weather Centre received reports of brief snow flurries. A month

ago, strawberry-growers were forecasting that production would be 40 per cent up on last year. Yesterday, Michael Alley, of the National Summer Fruits Association, said: "The main strawberry crop has been dlobbered. The

later-planted crops should be OK, provided it warms up, but this could still mean we will lose 10 to 15 per cent." Trevor Sims, an adviser at Wisley, the Surrey garden run by the Royal Horticultural Society, said: "Plums are look-

ing dodgy. The crop came into flower early and a lot of the fruit was killed off by the frost in late April. Frosts and freezing nights are not particularly uncommon in May, but they can cause a lot of damage when combined with an early spring which brings plants into early bloom."

Forecast, page 24



Saturday in THE TIMES

Ginny Dougary on novelist Fay Weldon as breadwinner for a 'strange' family of seven children weekend

Combined therapy may kill Aids virus

By IAN MURRAY
MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW treatments for human immunodeficiency virus may make it possible to cure patients within three years, scientists have said.

Although nobody has received the new treatments for long enough to show that HIV can be eradicated, researchers in America forecast that it should be possible.

So far drugs have been successful only in delaying the progression from HIV to Aids by about eight years. However, new therapies that rely on combinations of the more powerful drugs are proving successful in clearing out the virus, according to a team from the Aaron Diamond Research Center at Rockefeller University, New York.

In a letter to *Nature*, they report on a trial in which the HIV concentration in the patients' blood dropped by 99 per cent. That was followed by a second phase as the virus invaded the cells and multiplied but the number of infected cells continued to fall.

Flowers change genes for Chelsea

By MICHAEL HORNSBY
AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

GENETICALLY modified plants will be on display for the first time at this year's Chelsea Flower Show, although they will look no different from those with a more natural background.

The plants will contain "marker genes" - foreign DNA inserted into the plants to enable scientists to test whether the process of gene transfer is actually working.

Entitled *Mendel's Garden: Past, Present and Future*, the display is being exhibited by the John Innes Centre in Norwich, and named after Gregor Mendel, the Austrian monk whose experiments with peas in the 1860s revealed the basic laws of genetic inheritance.

Ray Mathias, head of science communication and education at the institute, said: "We see the exhibit as a way of informing a wider audience about the science and what progress is being made."

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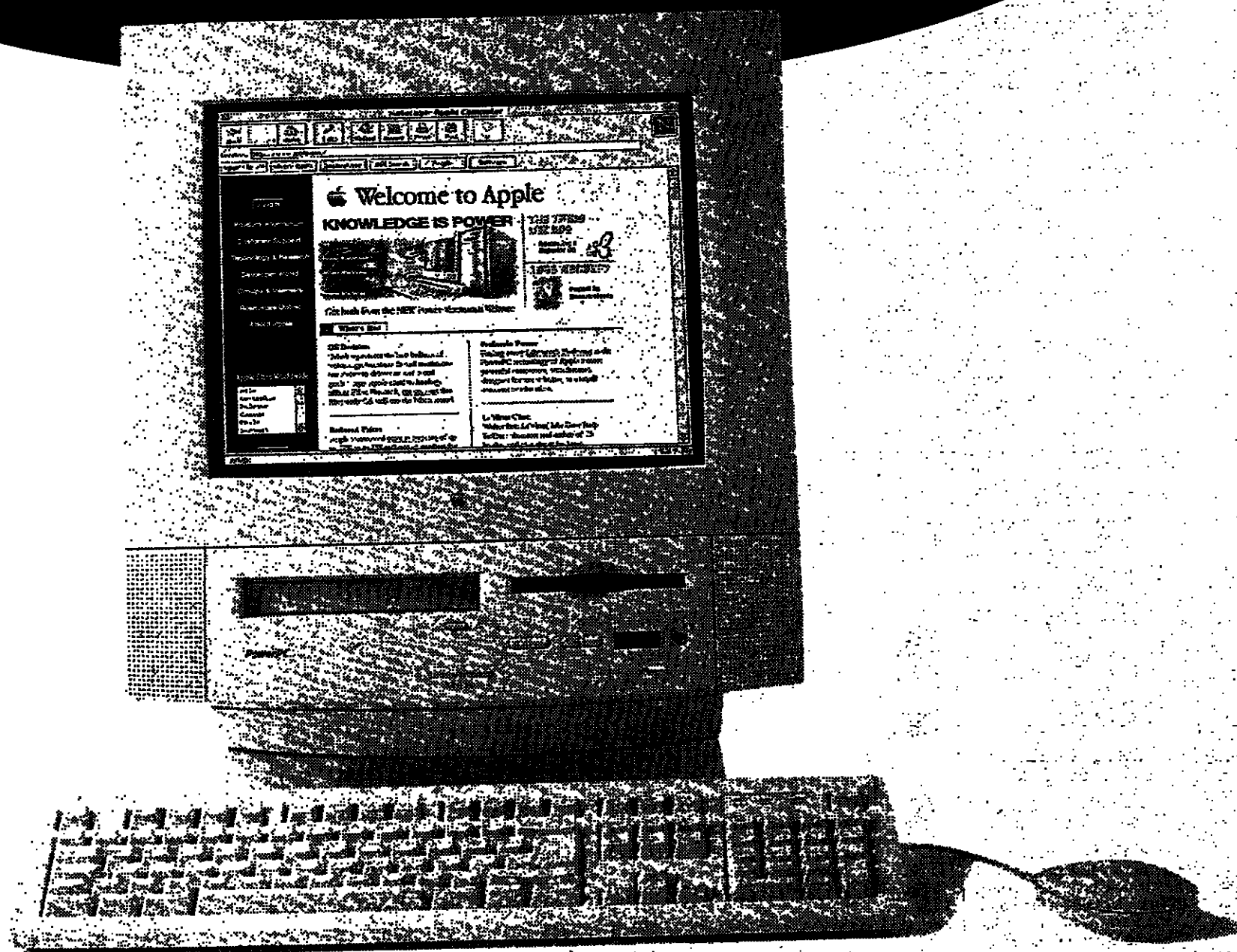
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Grandma: nature's unique design to protect the family

BY IAN MURRAY

SCIENTISTS have realised what parents have always known: that grandmothers are indispensable to bringing up baby. From Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother to Grandma, the stout old lady in black immortalised by the cartoonist Giles, grandmothers have been viewed with a mixture of affection and trepidation. Now their true worth has been recognised by a gerontologist at Manchester University, Thomas Kirkwood, who suggests that a "grandmother effect" explains the menopause, a condition unique to human beings.

Grandmothers are so essential to human society that natural selection supports women who stop having children of their own so they can become one, he told the Royal Society yesterday.

However, a similar evolutionary "grandfather effect" had not occurred, perhaps because women were always sure of their maternity while men could never be completely certain of their paternity, he said.

"Having children is risky and having a grandmother reduces the risk," Professor Kirkwood told a conference on ageing. "Grandmothers have experience and a valuable social role to play. At a certain point it becomes advantageous for a woman to



Giles's Grandma: designed by evolution

maximise the chances of her own children's survival by ceasing to run the increasing risk of having any more of her own, thus becoming available to help to bring up her own grandchildren. This enhances the chances of her family survival."

The woman's pelvis prevented her child's brain growing fully until after birth, so the help and experience of the grandmother in bringing up the baby was crucial.

Professor Kirkwood said human beings lived longer than most other animals because of the way the brain had evolved to reduce perceived threats to life from the surrounding environment. In a similar way birds and bats

had relatively long lifespans because their ability to fly reduced their risks.

Ageing was not inevitable, he said, but was a trade off for the ability to perpetuate the species by reproduction. Because humans had to expend some of the energy they absorbed in order to have children, they did not have enough left over to maintain the body indefinitely.

"Our genes back in the past evolved to regard our bodies as disposable," he said. The challenge for science was to find ways of improving the quality of life for the elderly so that they could enjoy old age without debilitating effects.

George Martin, of Washington State University in Seattle, said diet could prolong active life. Experiments on rats had shown that cutting their caloric intake by 40 per cent increased their life expectancy by a half.

However genetic changes down the centuries had had a greater effect on extending the life span. Studies of fit elderly people were beginning to discover "successful ageing genes." There was also evidence that some genes which were successful in early life became dangerous in later life.

The genes which made a young man macho and capable of attracting women were the same genes responsible for the most virulent form of prostate cancer.

Civil War castle gains a victory for garden

SUDELEY Castle, in Gloucestershire, which dates from the 15th century, received the Garden of the Year award yesterday.

Sudeley was the home of Catherine Parr, the sixth wife of Henry VIII. She is buried in the chapel. Elizabeth I stayed there three times and Charles I slept there during the Civil War. In 1649 the castle was devastated by Cromwell.

The award, now in its thirteenth year, is given by Christie's and the Historic Houses Association to a garden recognised as outstanding for its horticultural and public interest. It was presented to Lady Ashcombe, who has run Sudeley since the death of her first husband in 1972, and to her son, Henry Dent-Brocklehurst. The presentation was by Christopher Balfour, chairman of Christie's Europe, and William Proby, of the association.

Mr Dent-Brocklehurst, a friend of Elizabeth Hurley and her boyfriend Hugh Grant, was accompanied yesterday by his girlfriend Lili Maltese, an American model. The couple plan to settle at Sudeley, where Mr Dent-Brocklehurst will run the estate.

The gardens, which combine ancient and modern, are largely the vision of two women — Emma Dent (née Brocklehurst), who inherited Sudeley with her husband in 1855, and Lady Ashcombe.



Henry Dent-Brocklehurst and his girlfriend Lili Maltese at Sudeley yesterday

Workers in £150,000 fiddles will not be fired

BY PAUL WILKINSON

NEARLY 80 council workers caught fiddling almost £150,000 from their employer have escaped prosecution. One woman member of staff at Sheffield City Council claimed sickness and holiday pay while in prison. Many others fraudulently claimed housing benefit.

Sheffield is so short of cash that it is considering up to 100 redundancies. Peter Moore, the opposition Liberal Democrat leader on the Labour-controlled authority, said: "Honest council workers feel it is wrong that their jobs could be on the line through redundancy while people who have committed fraud keep their jobs."

An auditors' report disclosed in March that 79 workers were involved in the loss of more than £145,000. The council did not think the incidents were serious enough to warrant sacking, except in two cases involving £19,000 and £15,000.

Malcolm Newman, the city treasurer, said that the council had decided against prosecution on advice from the police, who had taken the view that if the frauds were not considered serious enough to warrant sacking, the Crown Prosecution Service was unlikely to prosecute.

A council spokesman said that a revised code of conduct for employees and a procedure for investigating theft, fraud and corruption had been implemented.

How to lose weight: stop fighting over women

BY NICK NUTTALL
TECHNOLOGY
CORRESPONDENT

STONE AGE man resembled a weightlifter and was 12 per cent heavier than the average modern human being, a study has shown.

A team at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore analysed 163 fossils and bones dating from more than two million years ago. The findings, published in *Nature*, indicate that ancient man underwent large changes in body bulk.

John Kappelman, of the University of Texas, also writing in *Nature*, says it is likely that ancient man had a bulkier body because so much of his time was spent competing for females.

Modern human beings weigh, on average, 58.7 kg. In the early Pleistocene, between 1.2 million and 1.8 million years ago, man's ancestors weighed about 61.8 kg. By the early late part of this period, between 100,000 and 150,000 years ago, he had an average weight of 67.7 kg.

The Baltimore study, led by Christopher Ruff, also studied fossils of Neanderthal man living between 36,000 and 75,000 years ago. He weighed an average of 76 kg, or nearly 30 per cent more than modern man.

Brain study shows why sleep keeps us sweet

BY OUR TECHNOLOGY
CORRESPONDENT

SCIENTISTS may have unravelled why new parents and other people deprived of sleep become irritable and anti-social. Parts of the brain that deal with emotion and mood need more rest and so feel the lack of sleep more keenly, researchers believe.

The findings, by a team at the University of Liege, Belgium, have come from a study in which the brains of eight men were scanned while they were asleep. The scanner showed blood flow to the various parts of the brain.

The researchers found that some areas remained reasonably active during sleep while others became almost dormant. The most inactive regions were in the orbitofrontal and the anterior cingulate parts of the cortex. These are areas linked to emotion, behaviour and social interaction. Previous studies have shown that, when people are awake, these areas are among the most active.

Mircea Steriade, a neurophysiologist at Laval University, Quebec, says in *New Scientist*: "Perhaps those parts of the brain that are quite important during the waking state need more rest during sleep."

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Chambers matchmaker and an old friend answer Blair's call to take on senior positions in the law

Cupid, QC, will be at heart of legal reforms

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THE new Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, QC, was sworn in with tradition, pomp and ceremony at the Royal Courts of Justice yesterday.

Flanked by the Lord Chief Justice and Master of the Rolls in ceremonial dress, Lord Irvine, 56, a close friend of the Blairs, took the oaths of loyalty before a court packed with judges, lawyers, members of his chambers and family. With Court of Appeal judges in black and gold silk robes and the High Court judges in ermine and red, Lord Irvine — one of the most influential members of the Cabinet — promised to "be faithful and to bear true allegiance" to the Queen and her successors. He also promised to "do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of this realm, without fear or favour, affection or ill-will".

Lord Irvine's salary of £140,000 makes him the highest-paid member of the Cabinet after the Prime Minister. Not only will he play a crucial role in the Government's constitutional reforms, but as a mentor of Mr Blair his influence will be more personal and far-reaching. Lord Irvine

— Derry to his friends — has been a key figure in the Blairs' lives. They met when he took them on as pupils in 1976 at chambers in Crown Office Row, Temple, a year before he founded his own chambers in King's Bench Walk. At their wedding he proposed a toast to the couple, calling himself "Cupid, QC".

His new post makes him Speaker of the House of Lords, head of the judiciary and a minister with a large government department. No speeches were made at what was a strictly ceremonial occasion. Lord Irvine stood at the centre of the Bench between Lord Bingham of Cornhill, the Lord Chief Justice, and Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls. The other High Court heads of division, Sir Richard Scott and Sir Stephen Brown, were on either side.

The Lord Chancellor appoints every judge below the level of the Court of Appeal and his advice is usually sought by the Prime Minister on more senior appointments. Lord Irvine is an advocate of incorporating the European Convention on Human Rights into British law via a Bill of

Rights. He will play the lead part in framing the Bill and in determining the extent of judges' powers. He will be active in the other constitutional reforms: devolution and reform of the House of Lords, where he favours abolishing hereditary peers' voting rights.

Lord Irvine was made a life peer in 1987 by Neil Kinnock after he successfully fought a series of High Court cases for Labour over ousting Militant Tendency supporters from the party. It was more than a reward for Militant-bashing: Mr Kinnock wanted more lawyer-peers and Lord Irvine was brought in as their apparent to Lord Elwyn-Jones, had Labour won in 1987.

Like his predecessor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, he is a Scot — from the same part of the country, Sutherland — and from what he calls "good working-class stock". His mother was a waitress and his father a roof slater who was active in politics as a shop steward.

Unlike Lord Mackay, his career has been entirely at the English bar, which he entered late at 27 after lecturing at the London School of Economics. He rose swiftly, becoming a QC at 37; for a year, he was the youngest in the country. He has built up a lucrative commercial and public law practice.

Some predict that he will prove less radical than Lord Mackay in making changes to the profession. His reforming zeal is likely to be proven on the wider constitutional front.

The profession believes that he will listen to its concerns on legal aid and civil justice, which he has pledged to review. He has also promised to examine the earnings of the highest-paid QCs on legal aid.

He once said that members of the legal profession were not the best candidates to bid for scarce public funds: "Lawyers don't appreciate how enormously unpopular they are."



Mr Falconer, his wife Marianna and children Rosie, six, Hamish, 11, Rocco, eight, and Johnny, four, with his father and stepmother yesterday

The silk who took a £440,000 cut

The new Solicitor-General saw the opportunity after 23 years at the Bar as too good to miss, Frances Gibb writes

Falconer and his wife Marianna are two of the Blair's closest friends as well as neighbours in Islington and, like the Blairs, are both barristers.

They are not, however, members of the Blair's political circle: their connection is that of old friends who go back to Mr Blair's schooldays, as well as through their professional work. The Prime Minister made a speech at Mr Falconer's 40th birthday party and the couple dine frequently at each other's houses.

Yesterday speculation was rife as to whether Mr Falconer had agreed to try the job for a limited term only as a stepping stone to the more

striking thing about him is his charisma — he is amazingly good company and always in a way which demonstrates his cleverness. He is a very magnetic and compelling advocate, and entertaining both in and out of court.

A pop music buff — "he can tell you the flip side of a record that was number two in the charts in 1963" — he married Marianna Hildyard, daughter of the late diplomat Sir D.H.T. Hildyard in 1985. She is a family law barrister who does a mix of legal aid and private work. Her income is unlikely to come anywhere near that of her husband's. They have four children who are being educated privately at an estimated cost of £21,000 a year.

The Prime Minister regards Mr Falconer as one of the brightest brains in the legal profession. They met at a friend's house when Mr

Blair was a schoolboy at Fettes College in Edinburgh. Mr Falconer went to Trinity College, Glenalmond, and then Queen's College, Cambridge. They kept in touch and shared a flat in Wandsworth, south London, in Mr Blair's bachelor days.

Mr Falconer was called to the Bar in 1974 and became a silk in 1991. His career has been entirely at the commercial bar. The Solicitor-General is usually expected to take the lead in some high-profile criminal cases but Mr Falconer would be unlikely to do so.

If his new career does not work out, he should be able to return to practice with ease. Rory McAlpine, a solicitor with the City firm Wilde Sappe, said: "He has a good track record and is well established enough that he could come back. He is now such a glittering name among City firms that he would not be forgotten overnight."



Lord Irvine, right, with Lord Bingham at the Royal Courts of Justice ceremony yesterday

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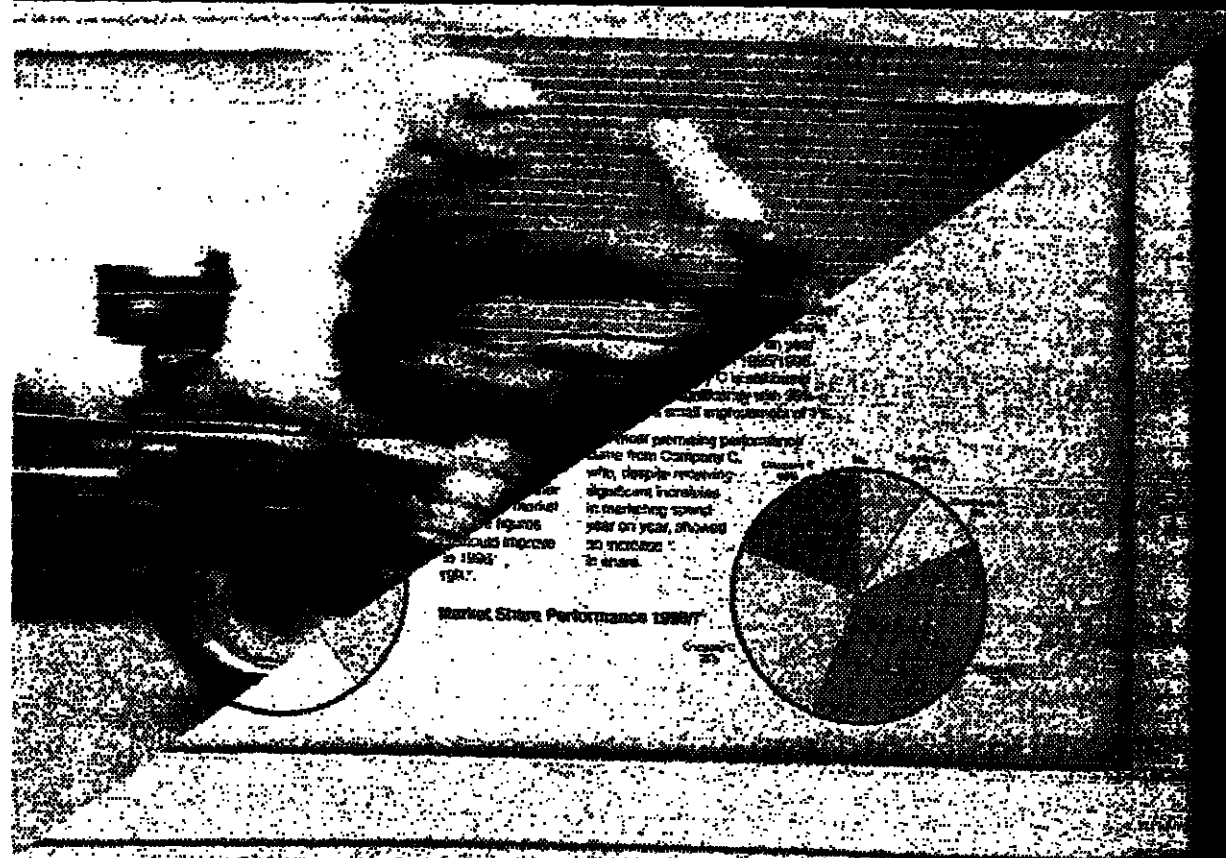
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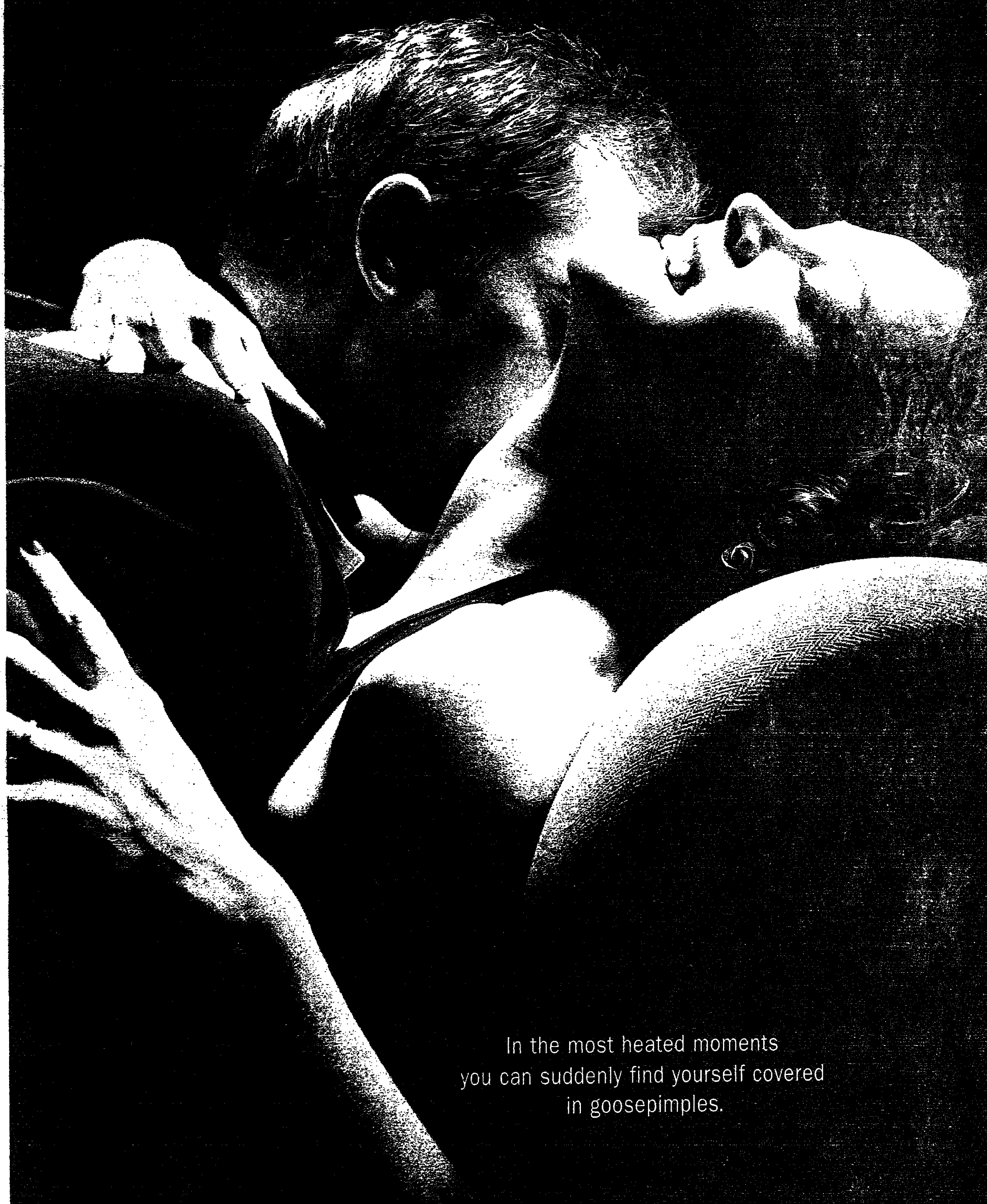
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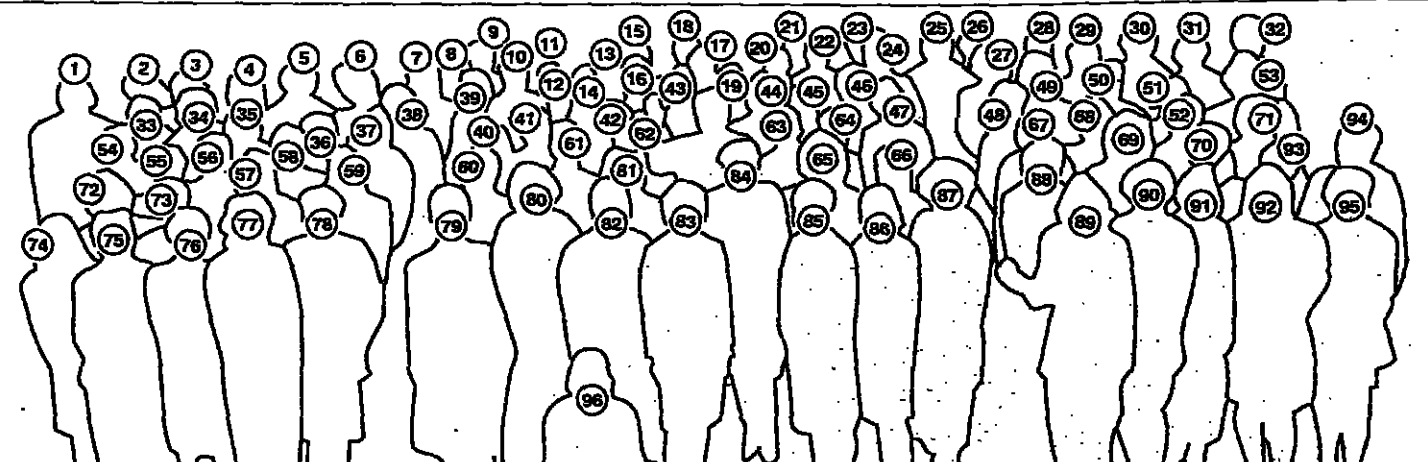
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Who's who in Labour's new force

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The following Labour women MPs were absent: Kate Hoey; Clare Short; Glenda Jackson; Lynne Jones; Julie Morgan.



Blair salutes 101 women

By JAMES LANDALE
AND GILLIAN BOWDITCH

TONY BLAIR showed off his new army of women MPs yesterday outside Church House in Westminster after speaking to them and their male colleagues at the first meeting of the new Parliamentary Labour Party.

In all 96 of Labour's 101 women MPs posed for an historic photograph with the Prime Minister.

The Tories have just 13 women on the Opposition benches. But they and women from other parties bring the total in the Commons to 120,

compared with 63 in the last Parliament. They comprise 18 per cent of the 659 MPs.

Many of the Labour women benefited from the party's women-only shortlists policy before it was ruled illegal 18 months ago. But many others have been selected since then entirely on their own merits.

The new influx of women hope to bring a new consensual style of politics to Westminster, which they see as still being dominated by a male, confrontational approach.

While congratulating Beryl Boothroyd on her re-election as Speaker, Mr Blair said: "I am delighted that the lead that

you demonstrated five years ago in becoming the first woman Speaker has brought us to a point today where there are more women than ever before sitting in this House."

One woman has made her own mark on history by becoming the first MP to use a wheelchair in the Chamber. Anne Begg, 41, a former Disabled Scot of the Year, beat the former Scottish Office minister Raymond Robertson to take Aberdeen South.

Miss Begg, 41, has been confined to a wheelchair for 13 years after contracting Gaucher's cell disease, a bone-softening condition.

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Shepherd joins Lilley's campaign as the battle to succeed Major gathers momentum

Tycoon who saved Tories backs Hague for leader

By Andrew Pearce
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE millionaire carpet tycoon who saved the Conservative Party from financial ruin was identified last night as a key backer of William Hague's leadership campaign.

Lord Harris of Pecham is regarded as the best fund-raiser the Tories have had, having been credited with wiping out a £16 million deficit in less than three years. It is not clear how much support he has pledged to Mr Hague, but each of the six leadership bids is expected to cost more than £10,000 in rent, office, and telephone calls for the six-week duration.

Lord Harris has told friends he has no intention of publicly endorsing any of the candidates.

Six telephone lines were installed yesterday in Mr Hague's campaign headquarters in the private St James's office of the Tory MP Jonathan Sayeed, John Redwood, one of his principal rivals for the leadership, lives next door.

Peter Lilley's campaign was boosted yesterday by being backed by Gillian Shepherd, former Education and Employment Secretary, who at one stage was spoken of as candidate. She would be his deputy leader, a partnership



Peter Lilley, whose candidacy was boosted by Gillian Shepherd, his deputy on the "Lilley and Gilly" ticket

that Tory MPs are referring to as the "Lilley and Gilly" show.

Mrs Shepherd said she supported Mr Lilley, the former Social Security Secretary, because of his "clarity of intellect", formidable knowledge of economics and "social compassion". Mr Lilley said that Mrs Shepherd would be his John Prescott.

Mr Lilley, who will reveal his choice of campaign headquarters in the next few days, is also supported by Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare. The campaign is being run by Eric Forth, the Eurosceptic former minister,

and the influential right-wingers David Willets and John Whittingdale.

There appeared to be stirrings of life yesterday in Kenneth Clarke's campaign, which is the only one not to have been publicly launched. John Gummer, the former Environment Secretary, will be a campaign manager in the former Chancellor's team.

Some friends of Mr Clarke admitted yesterday that so far their efforts had been hit and miss, verging on the shambolic. "Ken thinks everyone has gone off too quick. The final ballot will not be for at

least five to six weeks. There is plenty of time yet," one aide said.

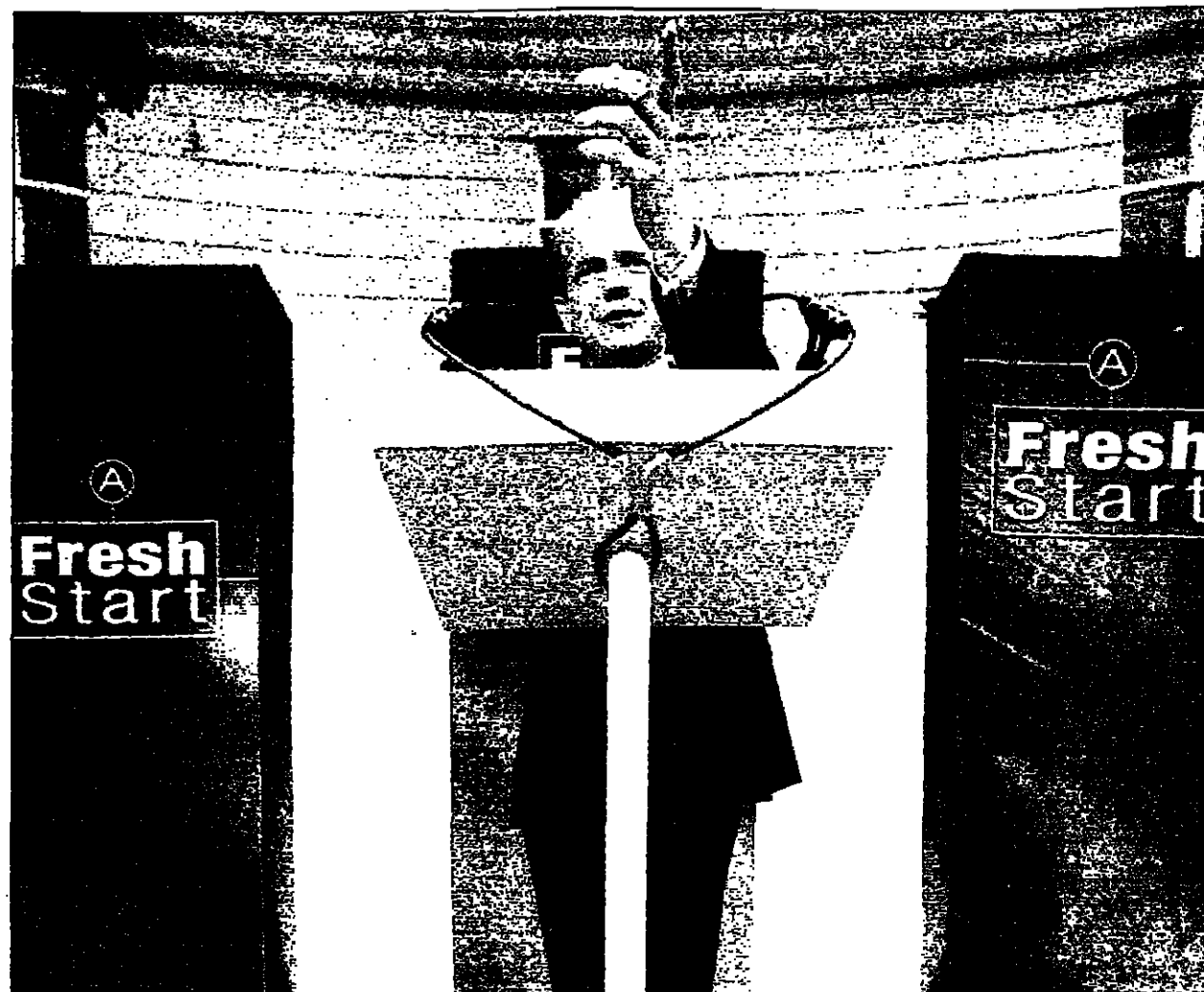
Mr Hague and Mr Redwood have both had a flying start in terms of organisation. The Tory MP Alan Duncan, whose Westminster home was the campaign headquarters for John Major's successful leadership contest in 1990, is a key figure behind the scenes for Mr Hague.

Mr Redwood's campaign is being co-ordinated from the offices of his Conservative 2000 Foundation in Westminster. The foundation, which has an administrative secretariat, is backed by wealthy but anonymous Tories who support Mr Redwood's populist right-wing agenda. The foundation has a detailed database on each one of the new Tory MPs. It has also forged strong links with Tory grassroots activists.

By contrast Stephen Dorrell's campaign headquarters are based, temporarily at least, at the Belgrave home of David Faber, the Tory MP for Westbury, who is his campaign manager. By yesterday evening there was only Mr Faber's own personal telephone line into the house.

Mr Dorrell had the public support of only one other MP, Simon Burns, the former Junior Health Minister. Gyles Brandreth, who lost his seat last week, and Graham Mather, a Tory MEP, turned out to give moral support. Several offers of funding have already been made to the former Health Secretary, but his aides declined to disclose their source.

The Michael Howard campaign is also well-organised. Mr Howard, whose leadership challenge was unveiled under the watchful eye of the industrialist Lord Hanson, will also have strong financial backing if it is required. The Tory MPs Sir Michael Spicer and Tim Collins are running the campaign. Francis Maude, the former minister, is also a key backer.



William Hague declaring his candidacy yesterday in front of a purple backdrop prepared only the night before

Young pretender shows his colours

By Damian Whitworth

WILLIAM HAGUE, announcing his campaign for the leadership of the Tory party yesterday, said that his political heroes were Margaret Thatcher and John Major. "And Peter Mandelson," muttered one member of his audience.

Anyone wandering into the room might have been mistaken for thinking that they had encountered an aspirant for the Labour leadership — perhaps a high-flyer among the Millbank Tendency. Mr Hague, the bookies' favourite for the Tory crown, chose to declare his hand in the airy, sun-filled Atrium restaurant, not far from Labour's election campaign headquarters.

"Ladies and gentlemen — William Hague," announced a sidekick, and the former Welsh Secretary strode purposefully onto a specially constructed platform. Mr Hague's rivals have tended to

announce their leadership bids from a sedentary position, behind tables. Here was Mr Hague standing behind a White House-style lectern with an illuminated set that declared: "A Fresh Start." The slick presentation prompted suggestions that his campaign must have been planned long before Tuesday morning when he broke off a deal with Michael Howard to be the former Home Secretary's running-mate for the leadership.

"I have an amazing team," explained Mr Hague. Later, his aides gave details of the astonishing overnight exertions of a design agency. The printers were happy to detail a "very fast photographic process which is new on the market".

Equally striking was the imperial purple of said backdrop, a colour, that Tony Blair's team appropriated for the last week of the general election campaign. The resonances of Labour press conferences became overwhelming when

Mr Hague spoke earnestly of reforming his party and concluded, of the opposition: "We have a great deal to learn from them in communicating through the modern media."

Mr Hague's bald pate, which gleamed in the sunshine, adds years to his youthfully elfin features. He brushed aside suggestions that at 36 he was too young for the job: "By my age William Pitt was nearly on his deathbed," he pointed out.

Certainly, Stephen Dorrell did not outdo Mr Hague for gravitas. The former Health Secretary finally announced yesterday that yes, he was a contender for the Tory leadership. He did so from a friend's doorstep, accompanied by David Faber, the MP from whose Belgrave house his campaign is operating, and such Tory luminaries as the ex-television presenter and now ex-MP Gyles Brandreth.

Backbenchers set poll date

By Arthur Leathley
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

SENIOR Tory MPs yesterday set the timetable for backbench elections to precede the leadership contest.

May 21 will be the date for electing the chairman and executive members of the 1922 Committee, and the leadership vote is expected less than three weeks later.

The election of the chairman, five other executive

officers and 12 executive members will indicate the political balance of the party.

The date of the leadership election, which Tory rules dictate should begin on a Tuesday, depends in part on the length of recess ordered by Tony Blair at the end of May. A short Whitsun break in the week of May 26 will allow leadership contenders the opportunity to stage the first round of the election the following week, on June 3. A

second ballot would be held on Thursday, June 5, with a third, if necessary, on June 10. If Mr Blair holds to the tradition of a week-long Whitsun break, the leadership election may be delayed to June 10.

John MacGregor, a former Cabinet minister, Sir Archibald Hamilton, another former minister, and John Butterfill have made it clear they will stand for the 1922 chairmanship.

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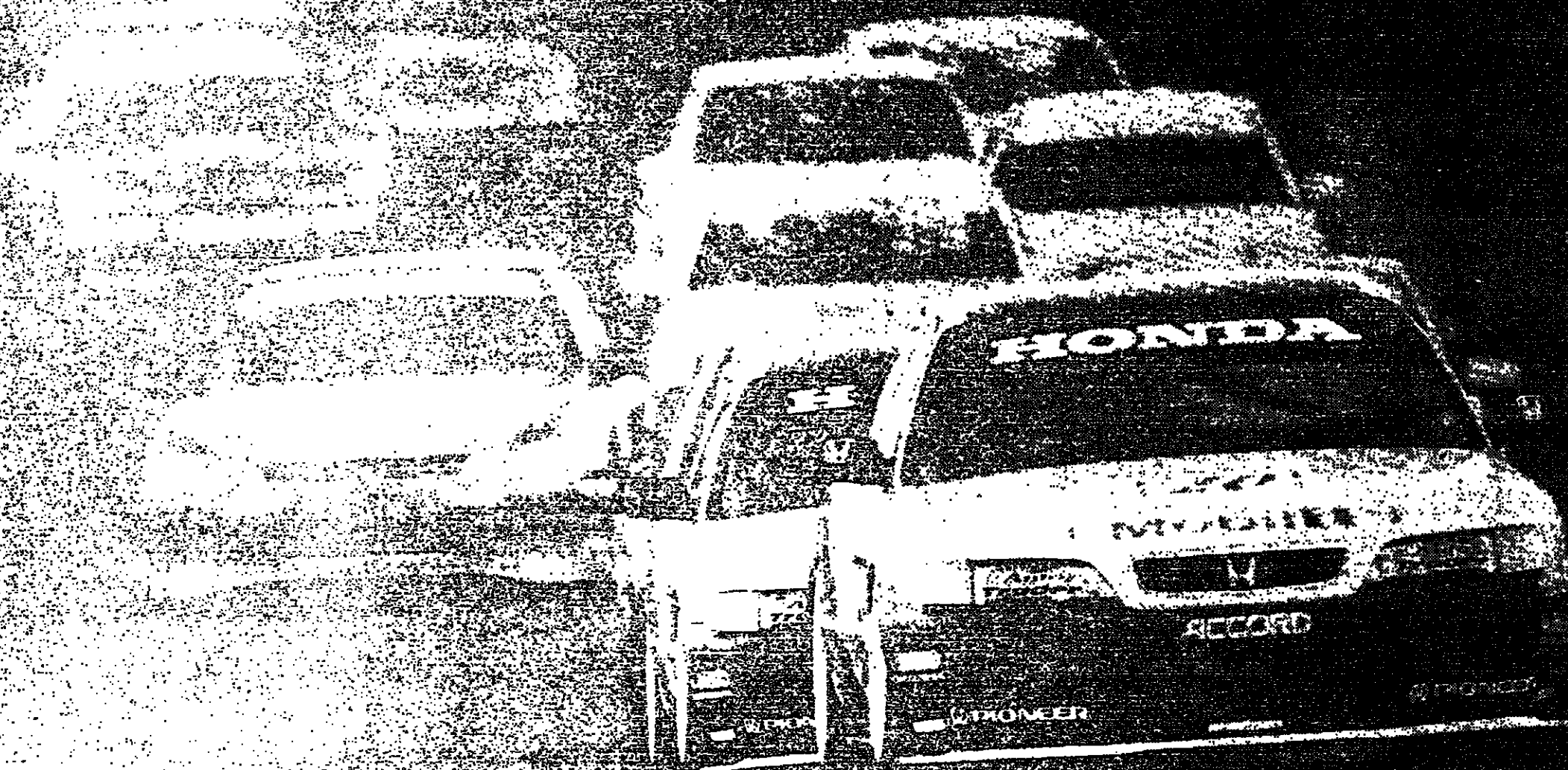
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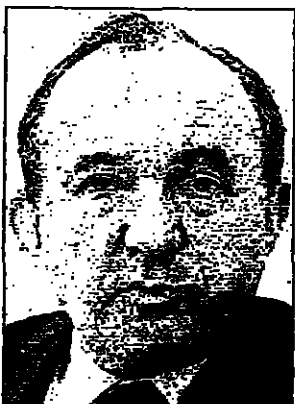
Bosnian Serb found guilty of crimes against humanity

FROM ANTHONY LOYD
IN THE HAGUE

IN A landmark ruling a year to the day after its conception, the first international war crimes trial since the end of the Second World War found Dusan Tadic, a 41-year-old Bosnian Serb, guilty of crimes against humanity on 11 counts of persecution and beatings. The charges include torture and the 1992 killing of two Muslim policemen in the Prijedor district of northwest Bosnia. However, Tadic was cleared on a further 20 counts, including nine of murder and 11 of "grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions".

He had denied every charge throughout, claiming that he was the victim of mistaken identity and an international plot - seeking Serb scapegoats for the war in Bosnia. Although the court totally dismissed his often vague alibis, finding him "untruthful" as to his whereabouts, Nikola Kostic, for the defence, said immediately after the verdicts that there would be an appeal on all counts, based on new alibi evidence.

The prosecution appeared equally determined to appeal. Among the trial's most contentious aspects was the failure of two of the three-strong panel of judges to agree that the persecution, killing and torture of Muslims and Croats in and around Prijedor in 1992 was part of a conflict of an international nature by which Bosnian Serb troops acted on the behest of Serbia. As a



Goldstone satisfied as to trial's fairness

result, 11 counts against Tadic had to be dropped, as they were deemed non-applicable as breaches of the Geneva convention because they referred to victims of an ethnic, rather than an international, conflict.

The presiding Judge, Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, dissented from that opinion, finding that the Bosnian Serb Army "clearly continued to operate as an integrated and instrumental part of the Serbi-

an war effort". Her view gave the prosecution ground to launch notice of its appeal to challenge the legal standards used to define the protection status of the Geneva Convention.

Although, regarding the case itself, prosecution lawyers will be disappointed that the most serious charges failed, the trial was welcomed by supporters of the tribunal system as having fulfilled its primary aim - that of justice. "Although this is the first trial conducted by the international tribunal and thus has some historic dimension the goal of the trial chamber was always, first and foremost, to provide the accused with the fair trial to which he is entitled," said Judge McDonald, giving the verdict.

Indeed the trial seemed to strive so hard to accommodate Tadic's defence that some conclusions appeared unduly pedantic. Among the charges that caused the most revulsion was one claiming Tadic had been among a group of Serbs who in 1992 forced a Muslim prisoner in the Omarska camp to bite off another Mus-

lim prisoner's testicles. Both died, one as a result of his wound, the other, with two more prisoners, after a subsequent, protracted beating. The court was satisfied that Tadic was present, but could not agree whether the four died as a direct result of that torture session.

Despite the judges' disagreement over Serbia's involvement in the Bosnia war, their finding Tadic guilty of persecution represented the first judicial condemnation of the Bosnian Serbs' "ethnic cleansing policy".

Identified by his nickname "Dusko" time and time again in the courtroom by those former friends and colleagues who in 1992 became his victims, Tadic is small but nevertheless symbolic fry in the tribunal's efforts to fight international lethargy and bring Bosnia's predominantly Serb war criminals to justice. The first to be handed over to The Hague - he has spent two years in jail - Tadic is one of only eight in custody out of 75 indicted war criminals.

Geoffrey Robertson, page 20



Dusan Tadic adjusts his earphones during his trial which ended yesterday with a mix of guilty and not-guilty verdicts. Both prosecution and defence may appeal

Sarajevo regrets failure to convict on murder charges

FROM AGENCY FRANCE-PRESSE IN SARAJEVO

THE Bosnian Government yesterday expressed disappointment that the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal had acquitted Dusan Tadic, who was found guilty of crimes against humanity and torture, on 13 counts of murdering Muslim prisoners. "Generally, we are disappointed that not all of the charges were accepted, but we are hoping that the punishment will be appropriate with the crimes committed," Mirza Hajric, spokesman for Alija Izetbegovic, the Bosnian President, said.

Nevertheless, human rights campaigners hailed the judg-

ment against Tadic. "The verdict represents an important benchmark for holding individuals accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity accountable under law," the US-based Human Rights Watch said.

Mr Hajric added: "The verdict that Tadic is guilty of crimes against humanity is a confirmation of the accusations of the Bosnian Government that the Serb leadership, led by [former leader Radovan] Karadzic and [military commander General Ratko] Mladic, had organised and been engaged in genocide."

Both Dr Karadzic and General Mladic have been indicted on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity, but remain at large.

The Bosnian Serb News Agency, meanwhile, said the verdict showed Tadic's theoretical guilt as it was not based on solid proof. It said the tribunal was faced with losing its credibility if it convicted Tadic on all counts and stripping itself of its political raison d'être if it acquitted him.

Tadic's brother, Mladen, said his brother was innocent. He said: "It is inconceivable that Dusko [his nickname] was found guilty when he never took part in the war."



Mladic faces charges but remains at large

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FROM SAM KILEY IN KINSHASA

PRESIDENT Mobutu left Zaire for a regional summit with fellow French-speaking presidents yesterday, fueling hopes he will not return to the country he has ruled for 32 years.

English-speaking diplomats and envoys said yesterday that they suspected that Mr. Mobutu, 60, would use the visit to the summit as a ruse to slip out of Zaire into retirement in Morocco or France, where he owns several palatial homes.

Members of his family, however, including Mobutu's wife, his son and a chief adviser, said yesterday that they would return to Zaire after the meeting with the Presidents of Togo, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea and Congo. One Mobutu family source

said: "He will ask them to help defend Kinshasa against the rebels with arms and men."

Mr Mobutu left Kinshasa in his black stretch Cadillac to jeers from the roadside. "President Kabila, President Kabila," chanted small crowds who saw his convoy bumping and lurching over potholes and splashing through puddles.

Young men raised two fingers in a victory salute to Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader who said on Monday that he would take the capital in "two or three days".

Members of Mr Mobutu's administration were making plans to flee Kinshasa; others had already sneaked away. General Baroma Kpama, who was dismissed as head of the civil

guard in January, fled to South Africa with other noted members of the "Binza group." Mr Mobutu's clique of friends who, like their Presidents, plundered Zaire's vast natural resources, while the country collapsed.

Tambwe Mbaya, an unemployed labourer, said: "We do not know if Mobutu is going to come back. All we want is peace and development in this country. We have had him for 32 years and he has done nothing but send us back into the dark ages. He just causes trouble. He should stay out of the country." His remarks drew cheers from a small crowd eagerly reading newspapers displayed along a wall.

"Mobutu out: Kabila coming" the headlines of some newspapers said. Others said

that at a meeting of French-speaking dictators in Libreville, Gabon, it was likely that Mr Mobutu would be given a sympathetic hearing to requests for troops. A diplomat

said: "There clearly is going to be a lot of nervousness in Libreville. People like (Omar) Bongo (President of Gabon) will not like Mobutu being pushed out because they are

As he spoke, gunshots rang out across the Congo River. They were fired by troops in neighbouring Brazzaville who

were shooting in the air to dispel striking workers from marching around the parliament buildings.

Letters, page 21

Death sentence upheld

FROM AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
IN KIGALI

COURTS in Rwanda upheld death sentences against three people accused of genocide and crimes against humanity and pronounced the death penalty on 11 more people; the country's official radio reported yesterday.

The radio said that a court of appeal in Nyabisindu, in the southern Butare prefecture, on Monday had upheld death sentences against three men charged with genocide and other crimes against humanity committed in 1994.

Seven other people were sentenced to death in Gikongoro prefecture, also in the south, and another four suspects in the western Gisenyi prefecture. Two other people were sentenced to 20 years in jail and three others to the same prison term.

Approximately 100,000 Hutus are awaiting trial on charges of participating in the massacre of more than half a million Tutsis.



Repatriation of Hutu refugees to Kisangani starts again after being suspended when 91 died in an overcrowded train

Ex-minister takes blame for killings by apartheid troops

FROM RAY KENNEDY IN JOHANNESBURG

GENERAL Magnus Malan, the former South African Defence Minister, declared yesterday that he accepted full moral responsibility for actions taken by troops under his control, including raids into neighbouring states when innocent civilians were killed.

Appearing at a hearing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Cape Town, he commended the African National Congress for deciding in 1994 that its national leadership should assume responsibility for the actions of its Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear-of-the-Nation) guerrillas, even when they had stepped out of line. It was a regrettable, he said, that "inspired" former National Party Cabinet colleagues, particularly P. W. Botha, the former President, were not doing the same.

General Malan was acquitted in October on charges of murder, attempted murder, and conspiracy to murder arising from the massacre of 13 men, women and children in a village in KwaZulu in 1987. He said yesterday that he regretted the killing of innocent people in raids carried out by South African troops but that war was an ugly business. He said that as a Cabinet minister he had agreed to the

establishment of the Civilian Co-Operation Bureau, the covert body set up by the security forces to eliminate opponents of the apartheid Government. But he claimed that he had never ordered assassinations.

He had attended meetings of the State Security Council, an inner-Cabinet committee set up by Mr Botha, when plans to launch a "third force" were discussed, but he insisted that it was never formed.

General Malan was Minister of Defence from 1980 to 1991 when the ANC threatened to break off constitutional talks unless he and Adriaan Vlok, Minister of Law and Order, were dismissed from the Cabinet. Between 1976 and 1980 he was chief of the defence force.

He told the Commission yesterday that he would consider applying for amnesty from prosecution for apartheid-era human rights abuses. The deadline for amnesty applications expires on Saturday. The Commission has granted amnesty to 39 people and rejected 797 applications.

□ **Durban:** Children who were victims of a decade-long turf war in KwaZulu/Natal province will tell their stories at Commission hearings here next week. (Reuters)



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Cook pledges co-operation with Europe

Sterile confrontation consigned to the 'Conservative past'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS AND ROGER BOYES IN BONN

ON HIS inaugural trip abroad as Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook flew to Paris and Bonn yesterday where he proclaimed that a new era in Britain's relations with the rest of Europe, based on active co-operation rather than sterile confrontation, had dawned.

As a symbol of what he pledged would be the Government's constructive approach to negotiating in Europe, Mr Cook announced an agreement with France and Germany to seek a worldwide ban on landmines.

In France, Mr Cook was received with all the pomp one would expect for the representative of a new, more Euro-friendly Government promising to put an end to divisions between the two countries.

With France in the grip of its own, hotly contested election, Mr Cook was feted first by the Socialist opposition and then by the Government, both equally anxious to attract some of Labour's reflected electoral glory.

Mr Cook said he hoped his visit to France would mark a fresh start in Anglo-French relations. "Britain wants to be one of the three major players in Europe," he added.

The new British Government will draw a line under the sterile, negative and fruitless confrontation which was the policy of the previous Government," Mr Cook said. "We want to see Britain be one

of the three leading members of the EU, working together to achieve an outcome in the interests of all our peoples." Later, he expressed the same sentiment word for word in Bonn.

In Paris, the Foreign Secretary said that Britain would stand firm on matters of vital national interest such as "preserving our external border controls against third countries", but added: "We believe we can better secure those British vital interests if we are not fighting the rest of Europe on every issue, as the Conservatives did out of prejudice."

"I am confident that we can achieve more working together than competing against each other... or shouting against each other, as under the previous Government."

The first stop on his one-day tour was for a private meeting with Lionel Jospin, leader of the French Socialist Party, which polls suggest is steadily gaining ground on the ruling centre-right coalition in the run-up to the election which will take place in two rounds, on May 25 and June 1.

The Foreign Secretary emphasised Labour's good relations with the French Socialists, but said Britain would work closely with whichever party was in power after the election.

M. Jospin called Tony Blair's victory "a good thing for the British people but also a good

thing for Europe" and described Labour and the Socialists as "sister parties".

At the Foreign Ministry in the Quai d'Orsay, Mr Cook was accorded the full five-star diplomatic treatment: a reception by the Republican Guard resplendent in their blue uniforms and flashing sabres, as well as red carpets and lunch with his opposite number, Hervé de Charette.

A ministry official said that a full honour guard was not usual for a working lunch; nor were red carpets in the pouring rain. The Government had decided to mark Mr Cook's first visit with special fanfare, he said.

After their lunch, Mr Cook and M. de Charette gave a joint press conference in the marbled grandeur of the Quai d'Orsay lobby. When asked why it was that both sides in the French election should be so keen to adopt the mantle of "Le Blairisme", Mr Cook said: "Everybody wants to be Tony Blair at the moment. That is a tribute to Tony Blair. But it is up to the people of France who they elect."

The landmine agreement, committing all three countries to push for a complete ban, was intended as concrete evidence of the new working relationship between Britain, France and Germany.

Mr Cook also promised a creative British approach to next month's European Union



Robin Cook addresses a news conference in Paris yesterday with Lionel Jospin, the French Socialist leader

summit in Amsterdam. "We want to go to the conference helping to set the direction and not, as the previous Government would have done, merely responding to the proposals of others."

In Bonn too, Mr Cook was not shy about stating the limits to Britain's new friendship with continental Europe.

When Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign Minister, said that "above all we need a common European currency", Mr Cook made plain that the British Government was concentrating on other economic priorities. On European economic and monetary union, the Foreign Secretary said: "A hard-headed assessment will

be made towards the end of the year."

Mr Cook emphasised to the Germans in turn his commitment to a deal in Amsterdam where European Union states will try to modify the Maastricht treaty and further develop European institutions. "It is our intention to reach an agreement at the inter-govern-

mental conference," he said. "We go to Amsterdam not with the intention of blocking an agreement. There are many areas where I am confident we can reach an agreement."

"The outcome would be a 'package' good for Britain, good for Germany and good for Europe."

New team to take tougher stance on human rights

By MICHAEL BUNYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

ROBIN COOK has told the Foreign Office that the Government will take a much tougher line than the Conservatives on arms exports, and may halt all weapons deliveries to countries with dubious human rights records, such as Indonesia.

The Foreign Secretary has also instructed diplomats to start urgent discussions with Britain's partners on a worldwide ban on the manufacture and export of landmines. Yesterday Britain made clear that it would join French and German initiatives in banning the use of all anti-personnel mines — a step the past

Conservative Government was reluctant to take. Guidelines will outline new Foreign Office priorities intended to give much greater emphasis to human rights in Britain's dealing with other countries. In opposition Labour called for an oil embargo against Nigeria, and is expected to take a tough stand against General Sani Abacha's military Government in the run-up to the Edinburgh Commonwealth summit in the autumn.

The aim will be to set out Labour's foreign policy principles and priorities. These will emphasise key themes which were trailed in the election manifesto: an effort to engage Britain's European Union

partners in a more co-operative relationship, greater emphasis on human rights, more attention to the global environment and policies supporting Britain's commitments at the Rio earth summit, and a new emphasis on arms control.

Labour will also insist that the Foreign Office does more to promote British trade and commercial interests. Mr Cook is to tell Foreign Office staff that they must do more to persuade public opinion that their work directly benefits Britain and British exports. He will make this message clear to all British ambassadors around the world in a video.

Since the new Government took office, Mr Cook has been involved in

intensive briefing sessions, mapping out his policies to his senior staff. He will also try to change the elitist image of the diplomatic service, looking for new ways to boost the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities, who are currently very poorly represented.

Next week the new Foreign Office team will begin one of the most hectic years in British diplomacy. Mr Cook will see Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister, today and travels to Paris on Monday for a meeting of the Western European Union, and then will have an intensive session of European consultations before the informal special EU summit on May 23, intended

to introduce the Blair Government to Britain's EU partners.

Later this month there will probably be a summit between Russia and Nato in Paris, followed by a North Atlantic Council meeting in Portugal. The EU Amsterdam summit begins on June 16, the Group of Seven will meet in Denver four days later, and at the end of June there will be a UN environment session in New York. Mr Cook will fly to Hong Kong at the end of June for the handover to China, and return for the Nato enlargement summit in Madrid in July. His diary for the rest of the year is just as full, and next year, when Britain takes over the EU presidency, it will be even busier.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Buddhist jailed by Chinese

Beijing: A Tibetan monk has been jailed for six years for colluding with the Dalai Lama in the hunt for the reincarnation of the tenth Panchen Lama. Buddhism's second most senior leader, who died in 1989, The Chinese authorities named their own choice.

China's official Xinhua news agency said a court in Xigaze prefecture had convicted Qazha Qamba Chilai for trying to split the country and leaking state secrets after a trial in camera. (Reuters)

Russian envoy leaving early

Anatoli Adamishin, 62, Russia's ambassador to London, is returning home early for personal reasons. (Our Foreign Staff writes). He arrived in Britain less than three years ago and was expected to serve for up to five years.

Diplomatic sources in Moscow say the frontrunner to replace him is Yuri Fokin, 61, now ambassador to Norway.

Briton escapes

Freetown: Kathy Jones, a British UN peace official, escaped unhurt when Sierra Leone gunmen ambushed a UN car. They wounded Robert Painter, an American, and killed the driver. (Reuters)

Population rise

Washington: The world's population will swell to 6.1 billion by 2000 from its current 5.8 billion, and jump to 6.8 billion by 2025, according to a Population Reference Bureau report. (AFP)

Ambush deaths

Agartala: Members of the separatist National Liberation Front of Tripura ambushed a security patrol in northeastern India, shooting dead 18 paramilitary soldiers and a policeman. (Reuters)

Down at heel

Manila: Imelda Marcos, the former Philippines First Lady noted for her many shoes and extravagant lifestyle, has been declared the poorest member of Congress, with a net debt of about £680,000. (AP)



Abacha: likely to face tough line from London

Venice in peril as tides push water level to 75-year high

FROM RICHARD OWEN
IN ROME

FLOOD waters in Venice rose to their highest spring level for 75 years yesterday, raising fears that the city is sinking at an increasing rate. Sirens sounded as the water rose to a record 49% above sea level, with tourists and residents splashing through water 1½ ft deep in St Mark's Square.

Lady Clarke, president of the Venice in Peril Fund, who lives near the Grand Canal, said the flooding was "extremely unusual for May". Officials confirmed that it was the worst since 1923. Duckboards which had been put away after the winter were

hastily taken out of storage.

Meteorologists said the unseasonal floods were partly due to the heavy rain in northern Italy over the past few days. But studies by Venice in Peril and Italian environmental agencies show the high waters have become more frequent because of man-made causes, including a channel cut through the lagoon for oil tankers, which has upset the hydrological balance of the lagoon, and extraction of water from artesian basins, which has aggravated subsidence.

The Italian Government is expected to make a preliminary decision this weekend on whether to allow oil and gas

drilling in the lagoon, a project which has aroused further international alarm.

Venice has suffered periodic flooding since it was built on wooden piles buried deep in the lagoon in the 8th century. But whereas high tides used to occur every three or four years, and usually in the autumn, they now threaten the city several times a year. Last November, the thirtieth anniversary of the disastrous floods of 1966, the water reached 52 in.

City authorities, who are preparing for celebrations next week marking the 200th anniversary of the end of the Venetian Republic, have increased flood defences. But a long-planned tidal barrier at the mouth of the lagoon has still not been built, partly because of environmental objections but also because of bureaucratic obstacles and alleged corruption over engineering contracts.

Letters, page 21

Catholics advised to enjoy life

Rome: The Roman Catholic Church suffers from a "sackcloth and ashes" image and should adopt a more Epicurean "eat, drink and be merry" attitude to life, according to a leading theologian (Richard Owen writes).

Mgr Giordano Muraro, the "resident theologian" on *Famiglia Cristiana*, Italy's most widely read Catholic magazine, said there was "nothing un-Christian about the pursuit of pleasure". Monsignor Muraro, a Dominican priest, told readers there was no scriptural authority for the often "excessively gloomy and lachrymose" Roman Catholic approach to life's pleasures, which he listed as "eating, drinking, sex, dancing and playing". He said: "It is not written anywhere that suffering is a pre-condition for entering Paradise."

The magazine has increasingly incurred the wrath of the Vatican by advocating liberal views.

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JAEGER



Intelligence officials fear war with neighbours and Palestinian uprising

Israeli security chiefs paint Netanyahu a gloomy picture

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN TEL AVIV

THE Israeli Government has been presented with one of its gloomiest reviews in many years on prospects for peace in the Middle East. Among the predictions are that by 2000 Iran will have missiles capable of hitting Israel and that the conflict with the Palestinians could deteriorate further.

Information obtained by The Times shows that Israel's security establishment believes fears of war are fast replacing hopes of peace. Among its immediate recommendations are a special expenditure of 50 million shekels (£10 million) to upgrade the supply of gas masks to the civilian population.

Key elements of the assessment presented to Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, include these points, said to be based on hard, professional intelligence rather than surmise or propaganda:



Netanyahu: long-term security analysis

Iran is in the process of manufacturing rockets described as cousins of the North Korean No Dong I, with a range of 800 miles, the first prototype of which could be

launched within two years. They will be capable of hitting targets in Israel and may also be used against Saudi Arabia. Israeli experts believe Iran is aiming for an eventual takeover of Saudi oilfields.

Whoever takes over from President Rafsanjani of Iran, after elections on May 23, is expected to steer Tehran along a more revolutionary international track. As well as chemical and biological warfare, Iranian missiles could have self-supplied nuclear capability within ten years — or in less time if plutonium or highly enriched uranium is obtained on the global black market.

Iran will continue beefing up supplies to the Hezbollah (Party of God) guerrillas fighting a low-intensity conflict with Israel in occupied southern Lebanon.

In the past year, 40 Iranian jumbo jets arrived in Damascus, the Syrian capital, carrying

ing weaponry for Hezbollah. The group is also mounting attacks on Jewish targets abroad.

New weapons that could seriously complicate the present conflict along Israel's northern border include "long-range" Katyushas capable of reaching the outskirts of Haifa, and Stinger shoulder-held anti-aircraft missiles.

These come from American supplies originally sent to Mujahidin fighters in Afghanistan. A number have been fired in Lebanon but have failed for reasons unknown. Their use has been so far unpublicised.

Syria has embarked on what is classified as a national project involving large sums of money on manufacturing chemical weapons with Russian help, including deadly VX nerve gas.

These gases enter through the pores of the skin rather than through inhalation.

Since 1994, President Assad

has ordered Syrian forces to adopt a military option. Such an option is serious, but circumstances will dictate whether he will employ it.

At present, Syrian energies are aimed mainly on convincing the Arab world to halt normalisation with Israel. It is open to question whether other Arab states would fight alongside Syria in a new war.

Growing friction between Israel and President Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority means there is now the possibility of a long and bitter struggle between the two, with the glare of international publicity ensuring that any local issue could become a regional one within hours.

Since thousands of Palestinians are now armed, a new struggle would result in a Lebanon scenario than the (1987-1993) intifada.

Despite the increase in Palestinian weaponry, the military balance remains overwhelmingly in Israel's favour.

A military source said the key problem would be what the Israeli public would want to do about such a conflict.

As well as analysing the potential for conflict over a wide area in coming years, Israeli sources also supplied Mr Netanyahu's right-wing Government with an assessment of prospects for various Arab leaders, many of whom may leave behind potentially violent succession struggles.

One source said a dangerous vacuum was foreseen in the event of the death of Mr Arafat, with Abu Mazen, his current deputy, unable to command the loyalty of the various internal Palestinian security services. No clear picture was presented about how such an eventuality would affect the moribund peace process which yesterday was subject to a new American rescue mission led by Dennis Ross, the US special envoy.

The death of President Assad, known to have been ill for years, could lead to chaos as his designated successor, his son Bashar, is not considered up to the post. The death of his elder son, Bassel, in a car crash three years ago, means that the most likely succession



New Katyusha rockets, the Hezbollah weapon, will be able to hit outskirts of Haifa

would be a shaky coalition of military and political figures led by Bashar.

In Jordan, the death of King Hussein could have different repercussions. If it occurred within the next few years, an orderly takeover by his younger brother, Crown Prince

Hassan, is likely. But beyond five years, complications could arise concerning the King's sons and the country's 60 per cent Palestinian majority.

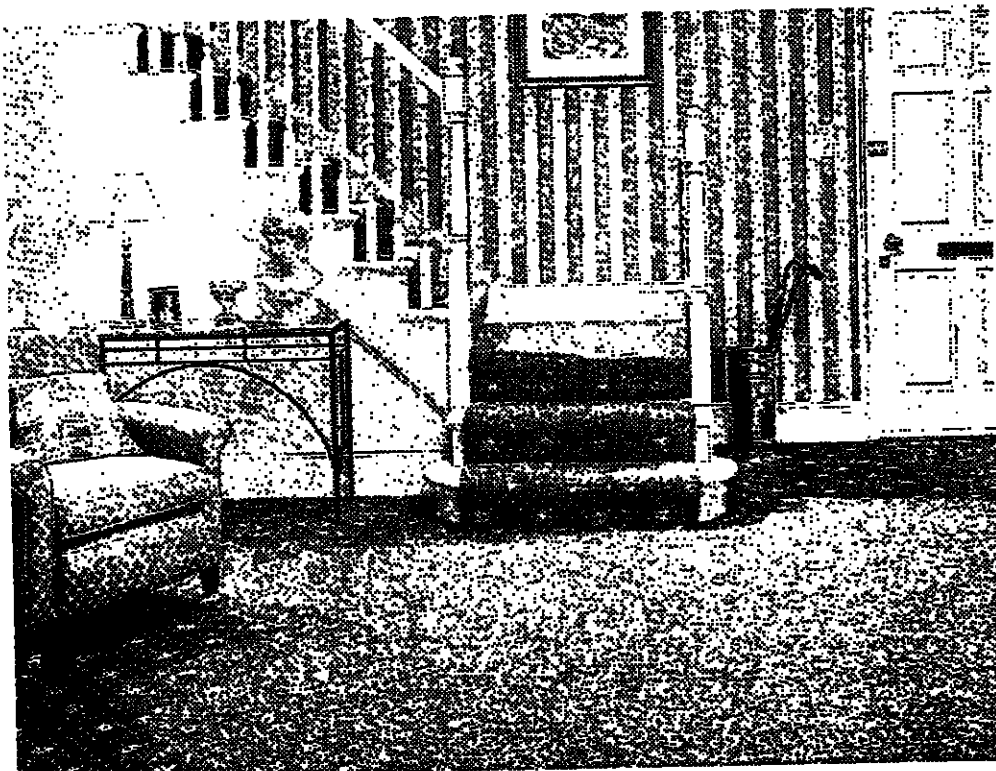
Under President Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi regime is seen by Israeli sources as regrettably stable. His death

could lead to a total collapse, with regional implications.

A recent assassination attempt on Saddam's favoured elder son Uday is seen as having Iranian backing, but Uday is dismissed as clinically insane.

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US report attacks Swiss for trade in Holocaust bullion

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

THE receipt by Switzerland and other neutral nations of Nazi gold looted from Holocaust victims and central banks helped Germany to prolong its capacity to wage war, according to a scathing study released by the US Government yesterday.

The report said there was conclusive proof that gold coins, jewellery and dental fillings taken from concentration camp victims were melted with gold plundered from banks in occupied countries into bars that were traded abroad. There was no evidence that neutral countries accepted such tainted gold bars knowing their origin.

While singling out Switzerland among the neutral countries trading with wartime Germany for its harsh criticism, the report castigated the United States role as inadequate and accused Britain of resisting America's more aggressive efforts to seek compensation for refugees from the stolen gold after the war.

Britain had feared that providing looted funds for resettlement of refugees would conflict with its restrictions on the number of Jewish refugees who could enter Palestine, then under a British mandate, the report said. It also found that the urgent desire of Britain and France to revive commerce with Switzerland after the war made them reluctant to join in tough economic measures against

the Swiss, causing serious policy differences with the US.

The report was compiled under orders from President Clinton from the files of 11 government departments, including millions of classified documents in the US National Archives. The project was directed by Stuart Eizenstat, a veteran Washington official.

He favoured using the remaining Gold Pool of \$70 million (£43 million), controlled by Britain, France and the US, in a fund for the benefit of surviving Holocaust victims. Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, announced in London on Tuesday that Britain would host an international conference to help resolve the ownership of Nazi gold seized by the Allies.

The report said serious

Review pledged on war conduct

Geneva: The Swiss Government yesterday welcomed the Eizenstat Report and promised to review the report's assessment of its conduct during the Second World War (Peter Capella writes).

But Flavio Cotti, the Swiss Foreign Minister, said that, at first glance the report did not recognise Switzerland's position in the war, surrounded by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

shortcomings in Allied policy led to a loss of most leverage before Switzerland had met its obligations to return Nazi gold after the war. Neither the US nor its Allies pressed the neutral countries hard enough to fulfil their moral obligations to help Holocaust survivors by redistributing heirless assets for their benefit.

Nazi Germany transferred looted gold worth \$400 million, equivalent to \$3.8 billion in today's dollars, to the Swiss National Bank to finance its war machine, the report said. In all, the Germans confiscated an estimated \$580 million, \$5.6 billion in today's value, "one of the greatest thefts by a Government in history".

Switzerland had a complex role during the war but the persistence of its "business as usual" attitude in resisting a postwar return of the gold was inexplicable, the report said.

The other neutrals were Argentina, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Turkey, which joined the Allied effort just before the end of the war. Of these, Sweden was the most co-operative.

The Swiss were obdurate negotiators, the report said. They denied having looted gold and opposed the return of any until the current international pressure came to bear.

Swiss banks now have a fund of \$180 million for needy survivors of the Nazis. "A positive healing process has begun," the report concluded.



THE reclusive French actress Isabelle Adjani, above, came out of hiding yesterday to join the adjudicators for the fiftieth Cannes Film Festival, which opened yesterday (Dalya Alberge writes). She is the festival president.

Two years ago, she locked herself in her hotel, refusing to emerge. Yesterday, though, she spoke at a press conference of the excitement of watching films. Adjani's talents were

Adjani comes out of hiding

discovered and promoted by the songwriter Serge Gainsbourg and the film-maker François Truffaut and she is best known for her performance as Camille Claudel, Rodin's mistress, for which she was received an Oscar nomination.

Crowds jostled for the briefest glimpse of the first of the Hollywood

superstars to descend on Cannes. Bruce Willis came to launch *The Fifth Element*, which opened the festival. It is a Hollywood sci-fi blockbuster set in 23rd-century New York — made in Britain at Pinewood Studios by the French director, Luc Besson. Besson said that Britain's superlative technicians were a major

reason for his decision to make the film across the Channel.

Willis plays a New York cabbie who fights the aliens, a cross between armadillos and porcupines. The star, who is said to have been paid £15 million for a *Die Hard* sequel, said that he loves coming to Europe because he is not asked about the cost of the film and how much actors get paid. He was immediately asked those very questions.

Kennedy escapes underage sex charge

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

THE latest lurid instalment in the sex lore of the Kennedy clan appears to have ended as abruptly as it had begun, with the woman who alleged that she had an affair with Michael Kennedy when she was a 14-year-old babysitter announcing yesterday that she would not press charges.

Lawyers for Marisa Verrochi, now 19, cited fear of pressure and damaging pub-

licity as the main reasons for which she would not proceed with a formal complaint against Mr Kennedy, 39. Members of her family are among the Democratic party's leading donors, and were close to Senator Robert Kennedy, Michael's father.

The episode comes only six years after a cousin, William Kennedy Smith, was acquitted of raping a woman in Palm Beach. Although Miss Verrochi will not take the matter to court, public opinion remains

convinced that Mr Kennedy did have sex with her when she was below the age of legal consent, and was summed up yesterday by the *New York Post* headline: "Looks like Kennedy is off hook in 'rape case'".

The scandal broke late last month when the *Boston Globe* revealed that Miss Verrochi she had a passionate five-year relationship with Mr Kennedy, starting at an age when sex with her would have constituted statutory rape and

ending only last September. The revelations led to a "preliminary review" by Massachusetts police and prosecutors, but the investigations soon stalled after the Verrochis refused to co-operate. The family did not, however, issue a public denial.

Yesterday the police chief of Cohasset, where the Verrochis live, told the *New York Post* that he had a "gut feeling" that the Verrochis would "cover for Kennedy" to protect their only daughter.



Kennedy allegedly had affair with babysitter, 14

Navy women 'jinx' denied

New York: Speculation that the presence of women on the aircraft carrier *USS John F. Kennedy* has cast a jinx on the vessel has been dismissed by American naval commanders (Tunku Varadarajan writes).

Five crew members have been killed in the past three months on board the heavily armed carrier. Eight others have been injured seriously.

The recently refitted ship took more than 300 women into its crew earlier this year, and hushed talk below decks

now is of such traditional sailors' bogeys as mermaids and sirens. Women ratings are referred to by many men as "FJs" or "female Jonahs". Some crewmen invoke the name of Wendy, from *Peter Pan*, who was considered an ill omen by Captain Hook.

On Tuesday, naval divers called off their search for Nadia Aiten, 22, who was lost overboard in calm seas about 150 miles off the Florida coast last week. She has been listed officially as "lost at sea". In

March, four crewmen on the carrier were killed when one of its helicopters crashed while flying a training sortie off the North Carolina coast.

Despite the sequence of disasters, Commander Joe Gradischer, a spokesman for the US Navy, dismissed suggestions of a "Jonah-type jinx" or a woman-related "ocean-going curse". He said: "None of these events is related. Naval operations are inherently dangerous and incidents can occur from time to time."

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Dr Thomas Stuttford on the allergens carried by cats, how the technology of the racetrack and space industry can solve the problems of pressure sores, the use of glass as an offensive weapon and why aspirin continues to be hailed as a wonder drug

Why Humphrey the cat may have to move on

Humphrey, the Downing Street cat, may be tempted to go absent without leave again. The settled home provided for him by the Majors is in danger. It is reported that the Prime Minister's wife, who has perhaps read too many medical briefings, thinks that cats carry too many infections, and are too often a source of allergic disease, to be welcomed in the house.

Meanwhile, the Chancellor of the Exchequer is said to own a cat who wouldn't welcome a rival.

Cherie Blair may be right. Allergy to cats, particularly the dried skin shed by a cat, is a common source of rhinitis, a runny nose often associated with all the other symptoms of hay fever. Cats are also a frequent trigger for an attack of asthma in a vulnerable person.

If, however, the Blair children were to develop red eyes, a nasal discharge, a nocturnal cough or a wheeze it would be unfair to blame Humphrey alone. Other factors, the concentration of early summer pollen blowing into Downing Street from St James's Park, the tensions of a house move, and parents who will be preoccupied with demands made by their changed world would all be factors likely to play a part.

Nothing can be done about pollen, or prime ministerial responsibilities, but it is perhaps as well that the Blairs are, reportedly, using No 11 as their main home, leaving Humphrey to the bachelor Gordon Brown. The uncertainty of Humphrey's future,

and the increasing pollen count, are not the only reasons why allergic rhinitis has been in the news this week. There has been confirmation that Triludan, terfenadine and Astemizole, long-acting popular non-sedating antihistamines, may, when used in association with some antibiotics, in particular clarithromycin and ciprofloxacin, as well as grapefruit juice, may

to carry with them the risk of a quinidine-type change being induced in the heart's rhythm. It is also claimed that Fexofenadine, which is closely related to Triludan and is its active metabolite, is free of the risk of causing dangerously irregular heartbeats.

The current thinking on treatment for rhinitis has recently been comprehensively reviewed in *The Practitioner*.

Treatment for allergies is not confined to taking tablets or capsules by mouth. The nasal sprays and drops which are available have been improved over the last few years. Flonase, Beconase and Rhinocort are probably as well used as any. But to achieve the best result it is important that treatment start before any trouble is expected. Drops and sprays, as well as tablets, should be used for a fortnight before the atmosphere becomes laden with pollen dust from grass and trees, or a planned visit to grandparents who refuse to banish the cat is due to take place.

If it is decided to rely on local treatment and the nose is already blocked, steroid drops may be the best initial therapy. If nose breathing is still possible a nasal spray may be as effective and is easier to use for good penetration can be achieved with the patient's head held upright and slightly forwards.

Two new nasal sprays, Nasonex and Nasocort have both become available; they have the advantage of staying where they are sprayed and only have to be used once a day. These sprays, unlike some of the earlier ones, don't affect the sense of smell and

very occasionally cause cardiac arrhythmias.

This research has caused doctors to rethink their prescribing habits.

Sufferers from hay fever, or any other allergy, will not have to suffer in silence. Other antihistamines are available. Claritin is also long-acting and non-sedating. Its manufacturers claim that it has undergone extensive investigations in relation to cardiac arrhythmias and it has never been demonstrated that any have been caused by it. Zirtex and Semprex also do not seem



Humphrey: not welcome in the Blair household



Pressure sores are the most common complication of a spinal injury such as the one suffered by Christopher Reeve, which left him a quadriplegic

High-speed help for bed sores

Thirty years ago comatose or unconscious patients used to be regularly turned in bed, and their backs rubbed and cleaned every few hours. If back care is inadequate, the skin which has borne the dead weight of the immobile patient can become inflamed and break down into an ulcer. The ulcer, a pressure or bed sore, may erode the underlying tissue and on occasion they can become so wide and deep that the resulting toxemia can be fatal.

Although regular movement of the patient is now usually ensured by a ripple bed, or a mattress which provides an air cushion, it is still an essential part of nursing. Massaging, however, can introduce infection and it has been abandoned.

Yesteryear's ward sister would have been amazed to learn that the technology of the racetrack and space industry is now being harnessed to solve the problems of the pressure sore in the ward, or those that occur after the patient has been discharged.

The expertise derived by engineers in the pits is now being put to use to study the stresses that sitting, or lying, motionless in bed inflicts on the skin and subcutaneous tissue of a patient.

When a Formula One racing car drives into the pits, a small black box, like that on an aircraft or space rocket, reveals the strain to which the car has been subjected. A tattletale, which is a data-logging computerised card, can be taken out of the black box and later plugged into a computer. The tattletale will reveal the entire history of all the insults and trauma that the car's engine, suspension, steering and breaking has undergone during the race and will also show how the car has responded. Using this system, the information can be rapidly collected and analysed by engineers.

Professor Martin Ferguson-Pell has recently returned from the United States to take up a chair in Technology and Disability at University College, London. Professor Ferguson-Pell, who works at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore, Middlesex, is now investigating ways of adapting the lessons learnt from high-performance mechanical engineering with the aid of the black box and the tattletale card to plot the stresses and strains that may be borne by the human body.

One of the conditions that has interested Professor Ferguson-Pell is that of pressure sores. By using the tattletale, he and his team plan to find out how much stress the skin of a patient can stand before it becomes inflamed and breaks down.

His research team, which is funded by the medical charity Remedi, with the aid of a grant from the National Lottery, hopes to obtain information that will enable patients to be better nursed in hospital and to be taught the tricks of sitting, and regularly shifting, so as to avoid developing skin sores. Although pressure sores are the most common complication

of a spinal injury, they can affect any patient who is debilitated and immobile.

The apparatus being used by the research workers consist of cushions, or pads, containing multiple sensors, which, second by second, record the pressure exerted on them by a sitting patient, and hence the pressure the skin has to bear. The black box, with its tattletale, is screwed beneath the bed or chair and records these varying pressures. The multiple sensors in the pads now only record pressure but in the future some will be adapted to measure shearing forces and others will record moisture content and temperature, the microclimate which will also influence the likelihood of skin damage.

When fully developed the tattletale system coupled to sensory pads will also allow orthopaedic surgeons to study the pressure exerted on a limb stump after amputation from an artificial leg, or even the pressure on feet by ill-fitting shoes.

Glass attacks and their side effects

EVERY year there are 3,400 to 5,500 assaults in which glass is used as a weapon. A pre-election Labour Party report accepts that toughened glass — which shatters into a thousand pieces when broken — would protect bar workers and casual bystanders from fighting drunks who can so easily permanently scar or disable other people.

For the past decade research workers, led by Professor Jonathan Shepherd of the Department of Oral Surgery, Medicine and Pathology at the University of Wales College of Medicine, have been investigating the use of beer glasses as offensive weapons. Most injuries inflicted are to the face, but some people sustain lasting damage to their ligaments and deeper tissues of the hands and wrists.

Of 121 regular bar workers in South Wales interviewed by the research team, 41 per cent had sustained cuts from glasses, either as a result of assault or by accidental injury. Research has shown that when the glass is used as a weapon, it is usually used while intact and only breaks on contact with the victim's face.

The latest research studies the effect of cross-infection from broken, dirty beer glasses. The survey shows that half of all bar staff interviewed had been exposed to someone else's blood, thereby providing an unacceptable risk for the transmission of hepatitis B.

ASPIRIN continues to be hailed as a wonderdrug and new properties are regularly announced. The drug not only reduces the risk of a heart attack but is obligatory first-aid treatment after one.

Researchers investigating the cardio-protective powers of aspirin have concluded that these powers are not only related to the drug's ability to stop platelets sticking together. (Platelets are small particles in the blood which are involved in the clotting mechanism.)

A bereaved person's mental state may become arrested at any stage of the grief response. As was demonstrated by the BBC *Today* programme, which interviewed former MPs who had lost their seats in past elections, some people were still angry years later. Others remained depressed for years, but some fortunately had either not worried and had grinned and borne it, or had lived through their anger and grief to start a new life outside Westminster. When persistently miserable, the beaten member is likely to be anxious and depressed. If this state of mind lasts for more than a few months, or is very severe, the ex-parliamentarian would need to be

Hearts stay healthier with aspirin

The *New England Journal of Medicine* reports that measuring the C-Reactive protein level in the blood, which is a marker for inflammation, has revealed a correlation between this level and the likelihood of having a heart attack. As aspirin reduces the

C-Reactive protein level, by reducing inflammation, it was thought possible that its cardio-protective action could be twofold: that aspirin might reduce platelet stickiness and any inflammatory process which could predispose people to heart attacks.

It was shown that taking aspirin reduced the risk of a heart attack in those patients with a high C-Reactive protein level by 56 per cent, but had no influence on those with normal C-Reactive levels.

A possible remedy for post-election blues

COMMENTATORS have been quick to recognise the association between the loss of a parliamentary seat and the bereavement response. A defeated candidate might suffer a period of shock and disbelief, which would be followed by anger, depression, and later by acceptance. The grief response isn't brought on only by death but by anything that causes loss or separation from friends and a well-established lifestyle.

A bereaved person's mental state may become arrested at any stage of the grief response. As was demonstrated by the BBC *Today* programme, which interviewed former MPs who had lost their seats in past elections, some people were still angry years later. Others remained depressed for years, but some fortunately had either not worried and had grinned and borne it, or had lived through their anger and grief to start a new life outside Westminster. When persistently miserable, the beaten member is likely to be anxious and depressed. If this state of mind lasts for more than a few months, or is very severe, the ex-parliamentarian would need to be

treated with anti-depressants. Serenaxat might be the drug of choice as it alleviates both anxiety and depression without causing so much insomnia. That the patient is incapable of looking for a new job. One

word of caution, however. Drugs of this type are not recommended for anyone with liver damage, so if too much wine has been spent in Auntie's Bar, some other treatment would be needed.

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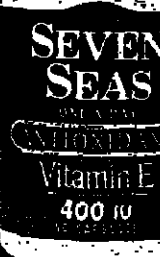
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1967-1987

Final day of our series: growing up with a cold, tyrannical father

I was born in the north London suburb of Fincham Road in a late 1920s terrace house, on August 23, 1935, the youngest of three sons of an impoverished, commercial traveller, George Edward Clement Strong, and his wife, Mabel Ada Smart.

The marriage was not a good one. My father had no sense of responsibility whatsoever for any of his children. It was my mother who was to be the driving force to secure for them what her father had told her was the key to their future education. To achieve that she worked hard, taking every kind of job, and leaving behind her a debt which no son can ever adequately repay.

Shy and introverted, I felt alone in this unhappy, riven household, creating, instead, my own secure world of my theatres and through wielding the paintbrush. Early on I became fascinated by the past, and although what I would like to have done most was to design for the stage (later I had the good fortune to marry into that), it was deemed safe for me to go on to read history at university with perhaps a career in teaching in mind. That came at the end of important formative years at the local grammar school, Edmonton County, where there happened to be one other boy, slightly older, who was also to achieve public distinction — Norman Tebbit.

Christmas Day 1949

I am writing this entry at 1.15pm, on Christmas morning at home at 23 Colne Road, having returned from midnight Mass. How strange it is to be sleeping in this back bedroom again after so long. I was the youngest of three brothers. Until I was 12 or 13 I shared the back bedroom with my brother Brian, at least from about 1944, when he came back from evacuation. We started in one double bed and then, as the war ended, that was exchanged with someone nearby for two black-iron Victorian ones. Miss was that nearest the door and the light switch, and I had to get out of bed to turn it off, treading on the cold linoleum square which was all that covered the floorboards.

There were no points and no bedside tables. The room was dishevelled and there was a small cast-iron fireplace which was never lit. In winter it was so cold that each morning the windows were a flowery pattern of thick frost.

The room was divided down the middle, the left-hand side being assigned to me. The solitary piece of furniture which was mine was an old wooden chest of drawers painted green. Alas, it had no drawers, and a curtain was stretched across it on a wire. Behind that lurked the shelves, on which resided what little one had. But it was better than what preceded it, for the double bed had during the war been moved to the room below and sat beneath an Anderson shelter, the centre of the room being jacked up by wooden joists in the ceiling fell in due to bombing. The back room in which I now lay had housed our neighbour's furniture piled high for the duration of the war. It wasn't till my mid-teens, when my eldest brother Derek married, that I had a room of my own, the tiny box room at the front of the house about 9ft by 8ft.

December 26

How old Father seems, and sad and irritating. He will be 75 next year. I look at him and find it very difficult to believe that he was apparently quite the life of the party when he was young. Occasionally there's a flicker of what might once have been but what I see now is a slightly bent figure with an enormous bloated stomach. He left school at 12 and seems to have forgotten what little he ever learnt there. I find it difficult to have any

communication with him, even now because he sleeps all day, waking only for meals, and has become terribly forgetful. His life has been a monument to the lack of will power. No one should be like that. I think to a funny kind of way that he loves my mother, despite having ill-treated her for 40 years. He wanted a housekeeper, not a wife. His attitude to women is basically pre-war working class. He still resents her reading a book because he regards that as laziness, but also because she is demonstrating her relative literacy over him.

November 21, 1984

The telephone rang at about 8am, this morning. It was Derek, my eldest brother. Father had died in the night. I remember saying to Julia years ago: "Don't think that I will shed a tear when this happens and I shall feel any guilt about it." I was right. How could it be otherwise? He was never interested in any of us. He had barely addressed a word to me for the last 25 years. Home in retrospect was largely hell, and all one regrets is that one didn't get away from it soon enough. Everything revolved around him. My early years were all of a pattern. In deprived wartime he always had his egg and bacon breakfast. We didn't. He always had to have his piece of steak for supper when he came in from work. We stood and watched. He always had what he wanted on the radio. He would always eat on his own. Indeed, Mother cooked in relays. He would shout "Mabel, Mabel", and she would rush panic-stricken to the kitchen. "Where's the mustard/salt-sauce etc?" The particular item would be only ten feet away in the larder or just behind him on the gas stove. But he would never move. He taunted her through life. "Why are you reading?" "Haven't you got a wartime job yet?" "Look at Mabel's teeth" (when the poor thing had lost one at the front). It was never-ending. Until the 1960s she was given £2.45 a week with which to feed and clothe herself and three boys. Yes, I did know what poverty was. Some days we would sit trying to rake together the far to Enfield or Palmers Green and a 1s 9d seat at the cinema.

He had no interest in any of his children that I can ever remember. He might have done when we were very young. Certainly he had no idea that they ought to be brought up. Year in and year out we trembled, awaiting his return from work. On went the old pink dressing-gown and out came the whisky. He sat in the corner of the sitting room with the radio by him. Piles of dirty handkerchiefs were to

'Home was hell, and all one regrets is that one didn't get away soon enough'

hand for he suffered badly from asthma. Indeed, he was always "ill". No one was ever so ill as he was but he went on till his 90th year. All my memories are of him being ill, of us having to be quiet, or leave the room, or carry things up and down stairs as he sat huddled in bed.

I think that he only ever took me out two or three times on my own, and that would be fishing on a Sunday morning, which I loathed. I remember making at school a small pouch for him to keep his tobacco in for Christmas. He dismantled it virtually before my eyes in order to use the piece of chamois leather as a duster. All through the war and after he had boxes of black-market chocolates which he kept in a cupboard. He would cheerfully eat one in front of us, or give one to one child and none to the others.

Only once did my mother ever get him to go to a parents' evening at Edmonton County Grammar School. I recall nothing home clutching a very good report and advancing to show it to him. He pushed it away unread.

My only memory of 23 Colne Road was of life under a dictatorship, my mother sitting, sometimes weeping, in the kitchen. Everything she said was prefaced with, "But don't tell your father". For 55 years this went on. Only in the last 20 did she get her own

back when he had to depend on her. Then she turned and became ironically his old self. But even then she ran round him still, crippled as she was with arthritis. What he needed always had to be fetched, carried, cooked. What a marriage! As a teenager I could never understand why in other homes I visited the family did things together like eat, go out, go on holiday. The husband and wife would be loving to each other and to their children. None of that ever came my way.

For a time I hated him. I use that word deliberately. As I grew up I suddenly saw him for what he was, and for what he had done to my mother and to all of us. I hated him for that. In one's teens it was all bottled up. How could it have been otherwise? From time to time it would explode in violent rages when I had

endured some awful humiliation. I have never felt anger, rage and resentment so deeply, so bitterly, as I did in my early teens.

I blamed him too for what I had become: "Mother's boy". For years as I grew into manhood I took his place. I went everywhere with her even into my early twenties. It was all so wrong, and when I achieved the break, my mother never quite recovered from it. On my marriage it was total. But it should never have been allowed to happen.

And yes, I was ashamed of Colne Road. I dreaded anyone I knew coming there. Father would always deliberately say the wrong thing. The person concerned would then be torn to pieces afterwards. Only as life passes and happiness comes can one have the true measure of unhappiness. Worse than that, only when one matures and sees good homes and good parenthood can one's own childhood be placed into context. God knows, my mother really did what she could. Yes, she loved us boys all, she cooked, laboured, went to work, subsidised us and really believed in our education, but it was at a price. We were to be her boys. No one was good enough for us, none of us should ever marry. The attitude was primeval. As I married last, for years I was held up as an example: "Roy's sensible," she would proclaim.

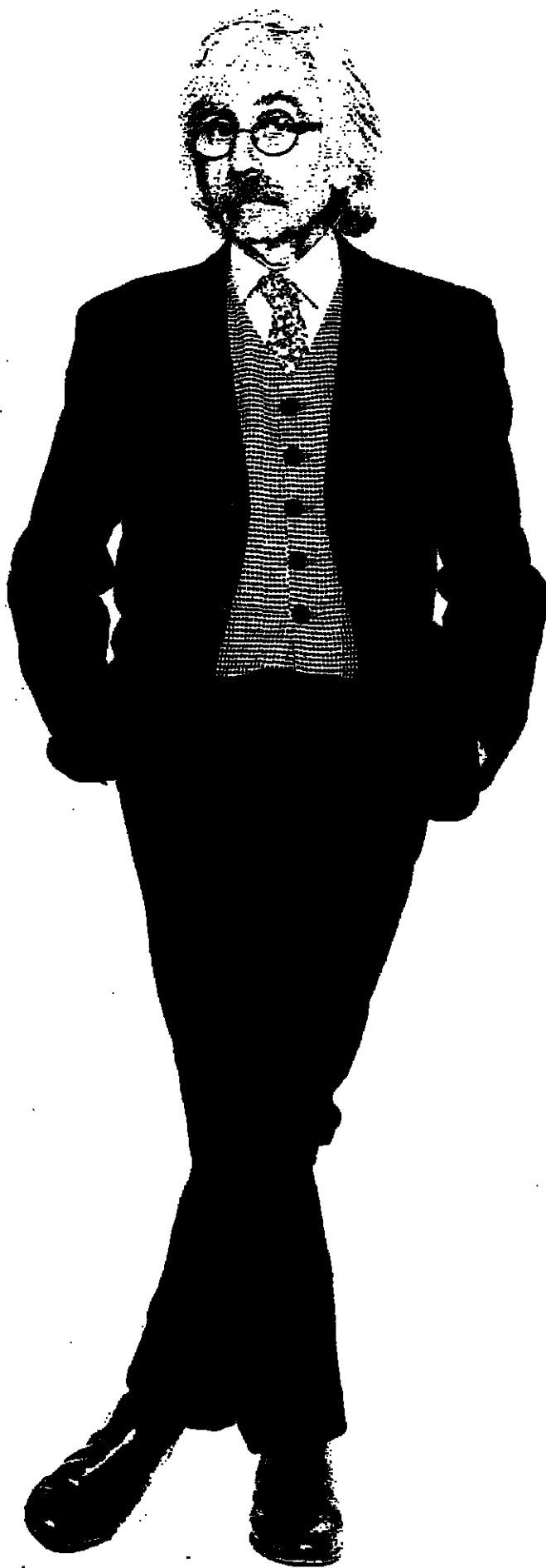
But to return to my father. What did life mean to him? Did he enjoy it? One tries to look with compassion at any human being. I suppose he got pleasure out of some things: fishing and the garden. The terrible thing is that I cannot think of one human gesture he ever made to anyone. I can't think of any help or kindness towards anyone either. I never recall one gesture of love towards my mother. Even birthdays and Christmas were reduced to a few pounds handed over and an entry in his ledger. Never a kiss, a bunch of flowers or a box of chocolates. And never a surprise gift. She sounded almost girlish when I spoke to her after he had died. I'm hardly surprised, but it's a false dawn.

Excerpted from *The Roy Strong Diaries 1967-1987*, by Roy Strong, to be published by Wiedenfeld and Nicolson on May 12, £20.
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Times readers can buy *The Roy Strong Diaries* for just £18 (a saving of £2 on the publisher's recommended price) by calling The Times Bookshop on 0900 134 459

'I can't think of one human gesture Father made to anyone. Nor can I recall a gesture of love towards Mother'

Mother's boy: "I went everywhere with her into my early twenties," says Roy Strong. "It was all so wrong"



Tranquil and secure with Julia

MICHAEL LEONARD



Getting married to Julia in July 1971

July 1971

At this point my diary really does falter, for I was on the lead-up to July 21 when I proposed to Julia in St James's Park after having taken her to a perfectly awful film of *King Lear*. From then on, and with all the machinations to achieve a wholly private wedding, everything else went out of my mind. What happened can only be caught in retrospect.

September 9, 1971. Letter to Jan van Dorsten (a Dutch friend)

By the time that this reaches you it will have happened. I will have eloped with Julia Trevelyan Oman! Unbeknown to practically everyone, to parents especially, I asked Julia to marry me on July 21. I cannot tell you how thrilled and happy I am about it all... No one knows. It has been a vast operation doing it so [that] no one does, and very romantic. In the church at Wilmore, near Stratford-upon-Avon, lies locked in the safe a huge special licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Gerard Irvine, a very good friend, is marrying us and David Hunt, his curate, is my best man — the old lady sacristan of 91, sworn to secrecy, is witness.

May 6, 1972. To Jan van Dorsten

We work hard and economise for the reason that we have seen the house of our dreams in Northamptonshire. We

have unfortunately fallen in love with it and are quite obsessed, which is fatal because it is expensive, but we have decided that we would rather live as decayed gentlefolk in grandeur than in bijou smartness in Brighton.

September 5, 1979. To Jan van Dorsten

Next Monday we will have been married eight years and my only regret is that it were not longer. We wish you both [Jan van Dorsten had just married for the third time] all the loving happiness that we have had and have every day together, all the eating together, the cooking, the washing-up, the planting and weeding, the shopping, the working, the everything — it is the most precious thing ever to be given.

1996. Postscript

... On the other side of the house Julia, I know, will be at her drawing board, our two cats curled up in nests close to her. We will meet at lunch, something always to look forward to... everywhere there are photographs of Julia and of our cats, both past and present. Julia happy picnicking at Glyndebourne, Julia peering through the branches of an apple tree laden with fruit, Julia doing her patchwork or embracing a cat. Outside spreads that paradise which we created together, the garden. I feel tranquil and secure. Can anyone ask for more?

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Britain's blind eye to inhumanity

Geoffrey Robertson, QC, shows how to put war criminals on trial

Dusko Tadic is no Hermann Goering. He had no political power, and not even a military uniform — he was a vicious hoodlum allowed to rampage through prisoner-of-war camps. His conviction at The Hague yesterday for "crimes against humanity" scarcely begins to fulfil the promise of Nuremberg. That historic achievement owed much to Britain, and the 1945 Labour Government. The new Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, may thus take the opportunity, rejected by his Tory predecessors, to give this nation once again a leading role in the enforcement of human rights.

The difficulties faced by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia have not been helped by Britain, which has not contributed to the tribunal's trust fund. Much of the work is underwritten by America and Holland. Britain has done little more than pay the salary of four investigators and provide some equipment. More seriously, the British Government has declined to provide war-crimes evidence believed by prosecutors to have been intercepted at GCHQ. More seriously still, the Government has refused to order British troops in Bosnia to arrest the Bosnian Serbs indicted for war crimes by the Hague tribunal. The Dayton directive "to arrest if encountered" has been translated as "avoid encountering at all costs".

This is the sorry way in which the last Government carried the torch of Nuremberg. That trial is celebrated because for one brief moment the international community allowed law to rule over diplomatic expediency. That it succeeded in providing a fair trial, completed within a year, for the Nazi leaders was in large measure due to the British judges and the British prosecution team, led by Labour's Attorney-General Hartley Shawcross.

In the aftermath of Nuremberg, the UN declared in favour of a permanent international criminal court. A proposal revived in 1992 as a diplomatic fig-leaf to cover its embarrassment at the failure to prevent genocide in the former Yugoslavia and, the following year, in Rwanda. This has led to its "showpiece" tribunal in The Hague, with one conviction (of Tadic) after four years, and the disastrously mismanaged Rwanda tribunal in Arusha, which has not even commenced its first trial.

The UN's basic mistake was to opt for full-blooded adversary proceedings akin to American jury trials. It was beguiled by the memory of Nuremberg, forgetting just how simple that case was to prosecute, in a defeated country, with defendants safely under lock and key and all the documentary evidence available.

The Hague tribunal has had to operate thousands of miles from the scene of the crimes, with witnesses now scattered across the world and with no power of search or seizure, let alone arrest. It has only eight defendants in custody so far, only one (a Croat general) of any seniority. Its adversarial procedures have produced rules that are exquisitely fair in theory, yet its need to protect witnesses has led its judges to make anonymity rulings which are manifestly unfair to the defence. In one appalling decision, the court ruled by a majority that Tadic would not be allowed to know the names of some of his accusers, on whose anonymous testimony he could be jailed for life. This was not so much setting human rights standards as betraying them.

The Tadic judgment is the time for the international community to take stock of this tribunal. Many diplomats (especially British, French and Chinese) do not want it to work at all, because they feel it will lead to the establishment of a permanent criminal court. But that is the real justification for its existence. It must make tyrants and torturers hold their bloody hand for fear that someday, somewhere, they will be held to account. A court which cannot reach Mladic and Karadzic is unlikely to deter anyone minded to emulate those who now live untroubled after their crimes against humanity.

Britain might change this by directing its forces to take immediate action to arrest Bosnian Serbs who have been indicted for war crimes. It should certainly reverse the policy of refusing to make its electronic intelligence available to the Hague prosecutors. This refusal is a breach of our obligations under Article 29 of the tribunal statute of the Security Council. The immorality of withholding evidence of crimes against humanity was recognised last year when the White House directed the CIA and the National Security Agency to co-operate with the prosecution. The new British Government should do likewise, before it incurs America's wrath.

Robin Cook could help to enforce human rights

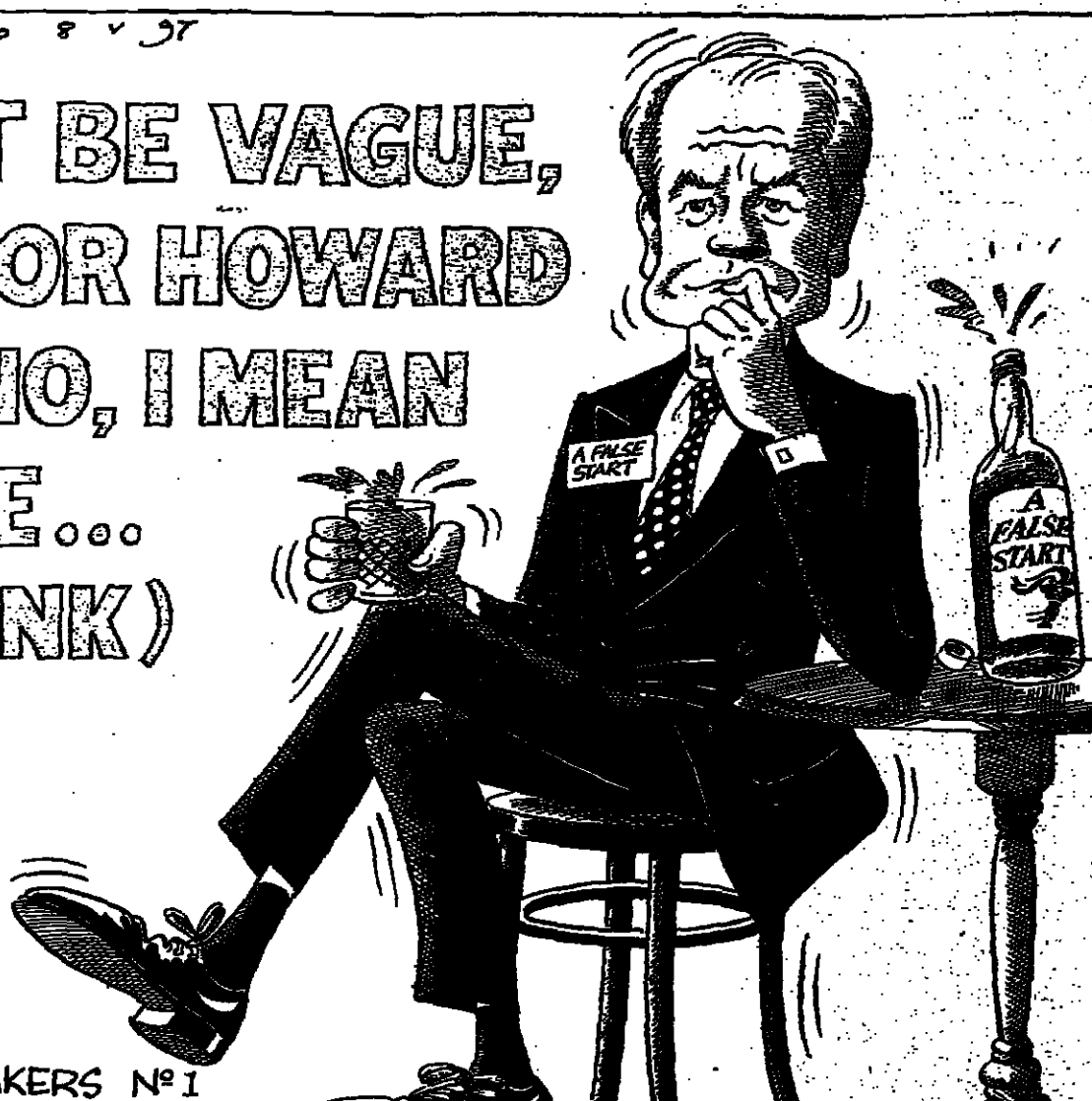
Then we might begin to make the kind of commitment to international justice that was made at Nuremberg. Britain has so far supplied no judges or prosecutors, and the barristers who assisted the Tadic defence (wearing wigs, somewhat absurdly, beneath their head-phones) have now been sacked. What is particularly needed is for Britain to take a lead at the Security Council, to change the clumsy adversarial format to that of a commission of inquiry, which can take evidence on the ground and operate much more speedily and effectively, while remaining fair to the defence at the investigative stage.

Mr Cook has an opportunity to renew Britain's reputation as a champion of human rights. He will recall from his readings of Matrik Churchill documents how little attention was paid to this subject in the secret decision to arm Saddam Hussein. His foreign policy should not make the same mistake.

Peter Brookes 8 v 37

DON'T BE VAGUE, ASK FOR HOWARD ER... NO, I MEAN HAGUE... (I THINK)

TORY DECISION MAKERS N°1



Don't bank on the Bank

Gordon Brown has gone back to a pre-war system. He may be right, but the euro threatens its stability

In 1946 a Labour Chancellor, Hugh Dalton, nationalised the Bank of England and transferred control of monetary policy and interest rates to the Treasury. This reflected the Labour Party's belief that the independent Bank's deflationary policies in the 1920s and early 1930s had caused the high unemployment of the inter-war period. In 1971, another Labour Chancellor, Gordon Brown, had restored control of monetary policy to the Bank, albeit subject to an inflation target fixed by the Government. This reflected the new Labour Party's belief that governments cannot be trusted with monetary policy, but will use it for political purposes. The pound has in fact depreciated by more than 95 per cent since 1946.

Neither Chancellor seems right. Independent central banks in the United States and Britain did follow the disastrous monetary policies which led to the 1929 crash and the slump of the early 1930s. Democratic politicians do have an inflationary record; it is easier to inflate than to maintain monetary discipline. All that can be said is that politicians usually make their mistakes on the inflationary side and bankers on the deflationary. Discretion may not be enough: the great American economist Irving Fisher thought that a predictable and largely automatic system of price stabilisation was required.

On December 18, 1922, Fisher testified before the Committee on Banking and Currency of the House of Representatives in support of the Gold Exchange Standard Bill "to stabilise the purchasing power of money". The Bill contained all the essential features of his own "compensated dollar" plan, under which the gold content of the dollar would be varied automatically to keep it a constant purchasing power.

He told the committee: "The Federal Reserve Act has stopped panics, but it has not stopped crises. We have been in the last 18 months through the severest crisis that the United States has ever passed through. That would have been avoided if we had had a stable dollar. . . . These business cycles, which pass through periods of crisis, depression, liquidation, recovery and so on are at bottom chiefly changes in the purchasing power of the dollar. . . . If you stabilise the dollar, you stabilise business. . . . The final result of inflation is a lowering of production. The same is true of

deflation. The average man is the victim either way." Irving Fisher's own "compensated dollar" scheme came to nothing. Whether it would have worked as a transition from the Gold Exchange standard cannot be known. It would probably have been less damaging than what happened. It might even have saved the world from the slump and therefore from the rise of Hitler and the Second World War.

The idea of automatic rules to stabilise currencies did not originate with Irving Fisher: he was himself fascinated by its history. There was a Massachusetts law of 1747 which valued the state's money in terms of four commodities: corn, beef, wool and leather. In the late 19th century there was a proposal by Carl Menger, the leading Austrian economist, that the price level should be stabilised by the issue of paper money, as required, to neutralise fluctuations of purchasing power. There was Frank Parsons' book, *Rational Money*, published in 1938, which advocated expansion or contraction of currency through a sliding scale of interest in accordance with the movement of prices. There was W. Stanley Jevons's support for what he called "a tabular standard of value". There was the Indian currency reform of 1893.

Irving Fisher is particularly important to the development of these ideas, because of his book *The Purchasing Power of Money*, published in 1911. He there argued that price changes are determined by changes in the money supply, and that those changes should be automatically corrected in the light of price changes. It is this automatic element that is absent from the theory of modern central banking: the discretionary method that Gordon Brown is asking the Bank of England to follow has unfortunately proved subject to great

errors, whether in the hands of government or central banks.

This is all based on a monetarist theory of the causes of changes in the price level. In the same book, Fisher developed his celebrated version of the equation of exchange, which is the foundation of modern monetarism. He claims that the quantity theory of money "though often crudely formulated, has been accepted by Locke, Hume, Adam Smith, Ricardo, Mill, Walker, Marshall, Hadley, Pether, Kemmerer and most writers on the subject". He even adds the Roman Julius Paulus, who wrote about 200 AD.

In 1911, Maynard Keynes, then a young Cambridge don, was fascinated by Irving Fisher's monetary theory, which he always referred to with respect. He wrote Fisher an important letter. "The question of currency reform stands now in a very different position from that in which it stood a dozen years ago. On the one hand the general use of index numbers for the measurement of change in the cost of living has been widely extended, and the public belief in this method greatly developed. On the other hand, the establishment of the Gold Exchange standard by India and its violent adoption by numerous other countries, have demonstrated that a truly scientific reform can supply a firm and stable basis to the currency. . . . A proposal for some combination of the Gold Exchange standard with a tabular standard has, therefore, an amount of practical experience behind it, which did not exist. . . . It is important therefore that the consideration of an organised currency on the part of all civilised nations should not be left untouched until the existing standard has begun to involve all countries alike in manifest calamities."

As so often, Keynes's insights, which are sometimes superior to the theories he developed from them, raise most interesting questions. The great virtue of the Gold Exchange

system, as of the earlier Victorian gold standard, was its combination of stability and universality. Gold was a world currency, or the standard for the world currencies. When we lost the gold standard, we lost this universality.

What Gordon Brown has done is to reintroduce an independent discretionary system on a local basis. It has the merit of being related to the movement of prices, but the defect of being arbitrary. Economists going back to David Ricardo have concluded that such a discretionary monetary policy will always be abused, whether by governments or banks. In 1946 this independent central bank system was thought to have failed completely in Britain, but now it is thought that the governmental system which replaced it has failed.

The proposed European monetary union is also a discretionary system, also in the hands of central bankers, also local, though for a larger region. If, like the Indian currency reform of 1893, the euro related to a stable external policy, it might be reasonably stable itself. But the record of unanchored discretionary systems of this kind is that they are not stable, even in the hands of competent central bankers. The euro will also lack the political foundation that the individual European currencies enjoy. It will not be built on a democratic basis.

Even in 1911, when currencies were stable and the world was at peace, Maynard Keynes had this farsighted foreboding that the existing standard might "involve all countries alike in manifest calamities". Irving Fisher had similar fears. In 1933 he wrote "I have a strong conviction that the two economic maladies, the debt disease and the price-level disease (or dollar disease) are, in the great booms and depressions, more important causes than all others put together." He even thought that the 1930s slump was so far the result of mistaken Federal Reserve policies that it would not have occurred "had Governor Strong of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York lived, or had his policies been pursued consistently after his death."

The independence of the Bank of England may prove somewhat wiser than the independence of a Chancellor of the Exchequer, but his discretion will still be open to dangerous errors.

Will ye no come back again?

Magnus Linklater on the gap left by the Scots Tories

As ever, P.G. Wodehouse put it best: "His whole attitude recalled irresistibly to mind that of some assiduous hound who will persist in laying a dead rat on the drawing-room carpet, though repeatedly apprised by word and gesture that the market for same is sluggish or even non-existent."

The Tory hound has been instructed, in no uncertain terms, to go and hunt for something better. The dead manifesto he laid on the carpet has been rejected. He still has that puzzled, chastened look on his face, but the light is beginning to dawn. He heads off, nose down, into the undergrowth. He may be gone for some time — and who knows what he may return with. In any event, most people are far too entranced with the top dogs who have replaced him to pay much attention. They are absorbed in the sheer novelty of new faces, new policies, the extraordinary sight of a Foreign Secretary saying Yes to Europe, a Chancellor handing over power to the Bank of England, and a sports minister in jeans.

It is this period of innocence that makes the business of opposition so thankless. The 165 Conservative MPs who huddle onto the Commons benches will feel not just outnumbered by the 419 Labour Members opposite (to say nothing of the 46 Liberal Democrats), but will be morally disabled as well. They will find it hard to mount a coherent criticism of the Government's decisions. Their principles will be dismissed as posturing; their objections derided as the cavilling of yesterday's men. Of nothing is that more true than of the Scottish measures that will dominate the first term of this administration. A major reform of the constitution will proceed through the House with not a single Tory MP in the country, most affected. The latest name to emerge from south of the border as a possible Shadow Secretary is that of Eric Forth. It is not hard to imagine the reception that will be accorded to the Member for Bromley and Chislehurst when he first rises to question the limits of a Scottish Parliament in determining health policy in Motherwell.

Yet that is precisely the kind of question that needs to be asked. Even the Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, speaks of the need for "proper parliamentary scrutiny and proper public debate" when it comes to considering the referendum Bill and then the White Paper on a Scottish parliament which is promised for the summer. The order with which all this will be done is, as Tam Dalyell has pointed out, the wrong way round: first there will be a short Bill to allow the referendum to take place, then a White Paper setting out the details of the legislation, then finally, and only after the referendum, the Bill itself.

Scots will therefore be voting on measures that have not yet been drafted. The White Paper needs the most rigorous examination, because it will be the first time voters see the small print of their future contract with Westminster. Unless someone is ready to point out the pitfalls, they will not have access to the kind of information they need to make a proper choice. It is no good looking for robust opposition to the Liberal Democrats or the Scottish Nationalists. The former are co-founders with Labour of the "constitutional convention"; the latter have only six members.

Meanwhile, Tories in Scotland have to decide on their own position if they are to have any role. The party has to pull back from the extreme anti-independence stance of the former Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth. To retain credibility it cannot be seen to be doing so too hastily; its present Chairman, Annabel Goldie, has already been criticised for trying to force the pace. Its best course of action would be to spend the summer examining the legislation as objectively as possible, pointing out anomalies in the White Paper without opposing its proposals root and branch, then standing back to allow the Scots to take their own decision. If they vote yes, as they are likely to do, the Scottish Tories can then perform a "decorous U-turn", support the moves towards a Scottish parliament, and campaign for election to it as soon as possible.

Long before then, unfortunately, there will have to be some blood-letting. Reclamations have already broken out over the way the party's former Chairman, Sir Michael Hirst, was forced to resign by members of his own organisation shortly before the election campaign. The timing and the ruthlessness with which the deed was done left deep wounds, which are only now being painfully probed. While that is going on, the chances of a coherent and united approach are remote.

So it is good to be able to report that at least two Scottish think-tanks, one formed by the Scottish Council Development and Industry one in memory of the late John Smith, are taking shape. Ideally, they will explore the reform proposals in detail, and will prompt hard questions about its weaknesses. They may not be able to do so in the traditional parliamentary style, but until the Tory hound has returned from its studdings in the undergrowth, someone else will have to do the retrieving.

Cross lord

THE first post-electoral defection is on the cards. David Alton, the moral crusader and former Liberal Democrat MP who was given a peerage in John Major's last honours list, is to abandon his party to become a crossbencher in the Upper House.

Alton was reluctant to comment on his plans yesterday, but the Liberal Democrats, still drunk with the number of seats they gained last Thursday, expect him to leave them — and appear to care not a hoot. "He has been seriously adrift from the Lib Dems for some time," says a party spokesman. "He never came to any meetings." Alton upset the party's chiselled leader, Paddy Ashdown, earlier this year when he suggested that "talk of a place at the Cabinet table for Paddy would end in tears. . . . before surrendering the independence of his party for the trappings of ministerial office, he needs to ask himself some tough questions about what will be gained and what will be lost."

In response, Paddy adopted a moral tone: "Surely to God we can now find a system of politics in this country where if we agree with another party we're prepared to say,

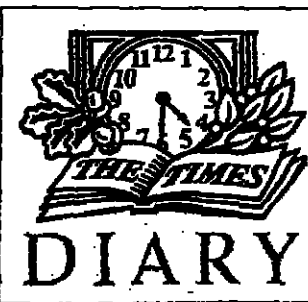
"I agree with you." Alton disagrees profoundly and blames Paddy for "caving up for a Lib-Lab pact in carpet slippers".

Stranded

JUST THREE days into a Labour Government, one of the bastions of old England has allowed standards to fall. For the first time in living memory Simpson's-in-the-



"I see William Hague has thrown his hat in the ring"



Strand is unable to produce Havana cigars.

Luncheon guests at the finest roaster of British beef were dumfounded yesterday when presented with a humidor which contained only Dominican cigars. Simpson's blamed a hiccup in supply, but there are suspicions of political correctness creeping in here, bearing the stamp of Ramon "Rayon Pajamas" Pajares, general manager of the Savoy Group and an active non-smoker.

• The Labour Party's parliamentary unit was given its first jolt yesterday, before Tony Blair even had a chance to demand that his MPs speak with one voice. As John Prescott ambled to the rostrum in Church House in Westminster, where the party gathered for the first time, MPs clapped, but not quite as one. Clare Short resolute-

ly refused to applaud. She and Prescott used to be good friends, but fell out when she was sacked from her shadow transport job.

Manor born

THERE will soon be a new addition in Prince William's house at Eton. Parents of boys in Manor House are clubbing together to sponsor a bust of Nigel Jaques, the last housemaster, to stand on the main staircase. Jaques, an aristocratic OE, ran Manor House from the late 1970s until the early 1990s. Under him it was a nursery for Tory scions, peppered with Douglas-Homes, Hurds and Channons. Already, busts of St Nicholas, Henry VI and housemasters from the late 19th century stand on the staircase posts. Jaques's gleaming pate and black-rimmed spectacles above an immaculate bow-tie will make an admirable target for whizzing ping-pong balls.

Sincerely

FIFTY years of British variety will be on parade at Golders Green Crematorium on Friday, with the back-to-back funerals of Margery Manners and Hughie Green. Manners, who wowed 'em at the East Ham Palace in London



Margery and Hughie variety at Golders Green

throughout the Fifties, is booked in for 2.30pm, and Hughie is due in at 4pm. A service usually takes just over an hour, without taking into account the extra hugging and reminiscences at old hoolers' funerals. Many of Miss Manners's mourners may well stay seated for



Green's last gameshow, which should attract some of those whose careers he launched, from Freddie Starr to Russ Abbot. Separate wakes will be held afterwards.

P.H.S



THE SCOTTISH VOTE

Devolution needs constructive opposition

So impatient were Scots for change that they could not wait until the autumn to show what they thought of the Tories and their inflexible opposition to devolution. On election day, they swept the Conservatives from every cranny of the nation in favour of parties that, in one form or another, supported greater autonomy. With no MPs at Westminster, the Scottish Conservative Party now faces a crisis of identity: it is riven with internal recriminations, anxious whether it should break away from Central Office in London and uncertain how or whether to oppose Labour's constitutional reforms.

Yet precisely because of Labour's enormous majority, the proposals must be opposed. Scots deserve at least to hear both sides of the argument during their referendum campaign. And once the referendum has been held and — as seems overwhelmingly likely — the principle of devolution accepted, there must be constructive debate about the details. It is a pity that the scrutiny will not come before the referendum. For the design of the legislation may determine whether the establishment of a Scottish parliament succeeds.

On Monday, Donald Dewar, the new Scottish Secretary, encouraged constructive criticism of Labour's plans: "that is part of the process and I would certainly want that to be done". But he would not promise that the legislation will, as convention dictates, be taken on the floor of the House of Commons rather than in committee. Indeed the new MP for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth, Rosemary McKenna, was ominous in her words: "With the majority we have everything has changed. Tony Blair will not be bound by convention."

It is when majority governments hold the unchecked power of elective dictatorship that conventions are most necessary. Mr Blair may well have enough MPs to pass laws requiring the slaughter of the first-born, but that makes constructive opposition of legislation all the more vital. If he ignores

convention and bulldozes devolution through Parliament, he will be giving notice that the "new" politics are even more arrogant and unaccountable than the old.

The verdict that the Scots gave on May 1 was for devolution within the Union. Although the SNP won more seats, its vote hardly rose. The clear majority was for the Labour and Liberal Democrat case that a Scottish parliament would assuage the nation's resentment and bind it more closely into the United Kingdom. Yet a badly designed Scottish parliament could give succour to the nationalists and boost demands for independence. That is why it is critical that the devolution plans work well.

Some elements in the proposals are sensible. It is good, for example, to use proportional representation so that minority parties, such as the Conservatives, win seats and so that Labour does not have a stranglehold over the parliament. But there are flaws too which have to be addressed.

Tax-raising powers are probably necessary to prevent the assembly being dismissed as meaningless by nationalists. The arbitrary 3p variation, however, may well ferment disenchantment. And Mr Blair's insistence that Labour members will not support a tax rise may encourage Scots to turn to the SNP in frustration. A promise made in the course of an election campaign to deflect Tory "tartan tax" charges may come back to haunt him, particularly if his own MPs threaten to rebel against an edict handed down from Westminster.

But most serious is still the West Lothian question. If unaddressed, this has the potential to rouse English nationalism against the Scots. There must be a quid pro quo for Scottish devolution. Having won his huge majority, Mr Blair can afford to reduce the number of Scottish MPs. And he should look again at public expenditure to ensure that the extra 21 per cent that Scots enjoy over the English really is justified by geography and social need.

UNUSUAL CHANNELS

Broadcasters should let their programmes do the talking

Michael Jackson, the newly-appointed chief executive of Channel 4, has shown himself as fickle as the finger of a multi-channel surfer and as pointedly rude as the raised digit of a Sicilian. He has arrived at his new employers full of bile for his old. Feted and groomed by the BBC until he became its Director of Television, he chose to accompany the announcement of his defection with an attack on the Corporation for neglecting the young, women and those outside the South-East. Gigolos show more loyalty to their past patrons than Mr Jackson has displayed. How much sharper than the serpent's tooth are the words of this ungrateful young controller.

Yet Mr Jackson is not so much guilty of filial impiety as of shame at his own past. Since Mr Jackson has been the architect of the current BBC schedule his words sound uncannily like the cries of a male, middle-aged metropolitan Caliban catching sight of his reflection on the small screen. They also set another unhappy precedent for a society where adding insult to injury is a practice sharply on the increase.

In politics, departures have been made worse by the manner of some goings. The trauma of leaving the ERM was compounded by the insouciance of ministers who sang in the bath while companies went down the plughole. The defection of Emma Nicholson left loose twin torrents of vitriol, from Ms Nicholson and her former colleagues. The innocent observer was left to wonder why, if she thought so little of this Government, she had tried so hard to join it, and why, if her party thought so ill of her, it

had tried to get her into Parliament. Politicians may be faithless, but more fickle by far are the world's unacknowledged legislators. Writers could teach Ms Nicholson and Mr Jackson a great deal about retrospective rubbishing. The publishers and agents who turn coffee-stained manuscripts into minor classics often find themselves, like servants in Samuel Richardson, cast aside and scorned while the talent that they fed moves on. It is unforgivable, but also understandable. Psychologists will recognise the classic response of the betrayer on being unmasked — to blame the betrayed for not being good enough to prevent such straying.

Fortunately, there are still some fields of public life where the hard blow of departure is softened with kind words. When sportsmen leave one team for another, it is customarily with thanks for the opportunities they have been offered with their old outfit. Even those, like Paul Gascoigne, whose charm is unshooked rather than old school have always paid tribute to their former teammates.

It is expected that most players will be gentlemen but even in fashion, a world where bitchiness is as de rigueur as Blahnik, it still isn't done to stick the stiletto into the organisation one is leaving. In the recent game of couture leapfrog in Paris, British designers stepped into each others' loafers with sincere expressions of respect. Genius knows it need not diminish others to flourish itself. Mr Jackson, a talented man of television, should let his programmes, and the ratings, do the talking.

PRIDE OF THE PROM

The BBC Proms are a model of how all concert series should be

Nobody begrudged the BBC a triumphalist note yesterday as it fanned its plans for the 1997 Proms in the Albert Hall. Last year's season attracted record crowds to a record number of concerts. They included such novelties as a Junior Prom and the "Prom in the Park", an event which confounded the sceptics by attracting 26,000 people to hear orchestral music in Hyde Park on a cold September evening.

This year Nicholas Kenyon, the Proms director, promises that "the world's greatest music festival" will spread "wider still and wider". That sounds boastful, but his claim is well supported by the season he has unveiled. At a time when classical concerts are struggling to recruit new audiences, the Proms continue to attract thousands of young music-lovers by virtue of their remarkably low ticket prices and the huge span of music covered every summer.

A gallery season-ticket to all 73 Proms this season costs just £95 — or rather less than the price of one stalls seat for an average night at Covent Garden. That season ticket opens a window on a world of infinite musical variety and splendour: from the sacred glories of Tudor motets to the decadent satire of Kurt Weill; from the profundity of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* to a quaintly nostalgic revival of Frank Zappa's *The Yellow Shark*.

The senior statesmen of the classical world — Solfi, Hainink, Brendel, Marriner — all play their part. But so do a host of bright new figures, eager to make their

name in concerts renowned worldwide. American minimalists, Georgian folk-singers, big bands, close-harmony crooners and cathedral choirs mingle with venerable orchestras from Leipzig and Amsterdam, Budapest and St Petersburg. There will be 30 first performances, but also anniversary celebrations of Schubert, Brahms and Mendelssohn. Pierre Boulez is in, but so is Cleo Laine.

Ultimately, however, it is not the performers who make the Proms special. It is the audience. Last year Kurt Masur, conductor of the New York Philharmonic, was asked how musical life in New York could be improved. "I wish we could steal the Proms from London," he replied. "The atmosphere is like nothing else." That is the Proms' defining quality. Prommers queue for hours each day, then stand throughout the concert, packed tightly into a sweltering arena. Yet physical discomfort is forgotten when the music starts. No audience is quieter or more absorbed; no cheer more thrilling than the roar which rises from the Prommers after some tremendous symphony.

More than a century after the conductor Sir Henry Wood launched his cheap concert seasons for ordinary people, the classical music world still has not overturned the elitist image which troubled that visionary Victorian. "Old Timber" would have been saddened by that. But the fact that his Proms are still held up as a model of how all concert series should be, all the time, would surely have made him proud.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Trade and popular consent within European Union

From Mr E. D. L. Price

Sir, If I were the leader of a European nation which was in, or just recovering from, a disastrous recession, and I was suddenly given the opportunity to impose higher employment costs on another European nation that had consistently lower employment costs, I would gleefully seize that opportunity with both hands and declare that it was "in the interests of European unity". In reality I would be defending my own nation's interests and redressing perceived competitive advantages.

The UK has some of the lowest non-wage costs of employment in Europe. The social chapter is designed to "harmonise" the social standards throughout the EU. I accept that only three measures have been passed under this chapter, but it would be naive for the UK Government to expect that it will be able to prevent other EU nations from trying to impose higher non-wage costs on UK employers using qualified majority voting.

Rather than sign up to the social chapter now, the Government would be better advised to declare that it would implement all those provisions passed under the social chapter for the other 14 nations while reserving the right to use the "opt-out", if that became necessary.

If, after a period of time, the social chapter had only been used in a genuine attempt to protect social standards, rather than in an attempt to redress perceived competitive advantages, then, using full signature to that chapter as a bargaining chip, the UK Government would be in a strong position to persuade the other EU nations to reform the disastrous agricultural and/or fisheries policies.

Yours sincerely,
EVAN D. L. PRICE,
32 Hampstead Grove, NW3,
May 6.

From Mr Tim Butler

Sir, So, just four days into the new Government and the EU is telling us that it is "not happy with the Government's pledge" to cut VAT on domestic fuel (report, May 7). What is the point of holding elections if the winners can't do what they've promised to do?

May I suggest we either abolish elections altogether and hope that Mr Santer and his successors will always be benign rulers, or we hold a referendum about who governs us. At least then we will know who actually is the government — the one we elect, or the one we can't.

Yours sincerely,
TIM BUTLER,
87 High Street,
Markyate, Hertfordshire,
May 7.

One-nation state?

From the Reverend Dr T. Bradshaw

Sir, Does the domination of the major offices of State by one nationality square with new Labour's politically correct value system, and is it not a matter for the Commission for Racial Equality to investigate?

Yours faithfully,
TIM BRADSHAW,
54 St Giles, Oxford,
May 6.

Lib-Dem legacy

From Professor B. K. Ridley, FRS

Sir, While it is perfectly understandable that the people should return Labour with a thumping majority after five years of unstimulating Tory rule, it is incomprehensible that so many voted Lib-Dem, whose principal distinguishing feature in power, albeit at the local level, is covering the roads with graffiti and bumps.

Yours faithfully,
B. K. RIDLEY,
Michaelmas Gate,
Mill Lane, Thorpe-Le-Soken, Essex,
May 4.

Radio poll

From Dr D. G. Wilson

Sir, My wife has identified a serious deficit in our democratic process. Enlivened by the complete change of government effected by the general election, we are nevertheless daily assaulted by the same old presenters on *Today* and *The World at One*.

Could not the BBC arrange for us all to vote for a new team?

Yours faithfully,
TIM WILSON,
9 Banham Close, Cambridge,
May 6.

Against the tide

From Mr Paul McCrudden

Sir, Your results table is wrong (May 3) to claim that there was no Conservative gain at the general election. Stratford-upon-Avon is pleased to be represented by a Conservative MP once again.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL MCCRUDDEN,
1 The Pinfold, Tiddington,
Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire,
May 6.

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

From the Editor of Intelligence Digest

Sir, Britain has just witnessed an awesome demonstration of democracy at work. An unpopular government, after 18 years in power, has been dismissed in dramatic style.

Whatever the reasons for the verdict, good and not-so-good, logical and not-so-logical, the electorate undeniably had the right to act the way it did. But were the combined peoples of the EU to reach a similar conclusion about the government of the EU, how could they perform a comparable exercise in democratic cleansing?

Yours faithfully,
JOE DE COURCY,
Editor, *Intelligence Digest*,
Intelligence International Ltd,
The Stonehill Centre,
Brimpsfield, Gloucestershire,
May 5.

From the Co-Editor of eurofacts

Sir, Sir Roy Denman (letter, May 5) would have us believe that 11 European member states could shortly gain "greater stability, lower interest rates, higher growth" from being in EMU; that from staying out of EMU Britain might seem to be gaining a competitive advantage which their tighter discipline forbids; that there is a danger that our irate partners may find our "wages or taxes dangerously competitive", in which case "they will surcharge our exports (social and fiscal dumping)". Finally, disaster will ensue, with massive disinvestment, lost exports and lost jobs.

This scenario is unconvincing. Rejecting EMU may improve or weaken Britain's prospects; it cannot simultaneously do both. Our wages are already higher than French and Italian wages, and if Sir Roy thinks that our partners are going to break Community law and infringe world trading rules by surcharging their best export market, then his opinion of their morality and their sanity is low indeed.

As for "fiscal dumping", Sir Roy presumably advocates increased British taxation, not for budgetary reasons but to ward off European retaliation. What can be the logic in believing that Britain's competitive economy is so resented by our fellow-Europeans that they will stop at nothing to punish us, to the point of illegality and self-inflicted damage?

Yours faithfully,
K. G. CARSON,
Co-Editor, *eurofacts*,
PO Box 9864, London W12 8WZ,
May 5.

From Lord Mackenzie-Stuart

Sir, The hoary canard that the European Court of Justice is political (letter, May 5) is nonsense. In 16 years I worked at the court with over forty judges and advocates general. The

statistical improbability of such an assorted bunch having a consistent political view is evident.

The European Community is an intensely political concept and its rules are made by politicians. The court's function is to interpret what the politicians have decided. As that very wise Dutch judge, Andre Donner, said to me long ago:

While the Court is apolitical, it occasionally has to remind the Member States of the obligations they have entered into.

As regards Mr John Deas's letter (May 5), I agree that political union without popular consent is no reliable bulwark against war. I would have thought that the election results in Britain demonstrated that popular consent for the aims of the European Union remained. One can support those aims without endorsing all its activities.

Yours faithfully,
MACKENZIE-STUART,
President, Court of Justice of the European Communities, 1984-88,
Le Garidel, Gravières,
07140 Les Vans, France,
May 5.

From Mr D. P. Marchessini

Sir, It is quite true that Norway is "an integral part" of the Common Market (it wishes to be) and that it is subject to most of the directives of the European Commission. But, as Dr Neville March Hunnington admits in a parenthesis (letter, April 30), the Norwegians are not bound to the EU as regards agriculture, fisheries and, of course, the single currency.

These are three very important points, and they cannot be dismissed as irrelevant. Furthermore, being a much bigger country than Norway, the UK would undoubtedly be able to negotiate even better terms than Norway has done.

Dr Hunnington also suggests that if we follow the Swiss path by withdrawing completely from the European Union, we would be in the same position as "Brazil or India or Australia or Canada" (the could have added the United States). Well, what is wrong with that? The Swiss continue to trade with the EU, and so do the United States and Canada.

Although we have a trade surplus with the rest of the world, we have a trade deficit with Europe. It is therefore very much in the interest of the EU to continue to trade with us, regardless whether we are members or not. In short, to use Dr Hunnington's phrase, we can certainly have our cake and eat it, too.

Yours faithfully,
D. P. MARCHESSINI,
Marchessini & Co. Ltd,
Kingsbury House,
15/17 King Street, St James's, SW1,
May 1.

Aid for Zaire

From the Director of Oxfam

Sir, Mr Hugh Jones (letter, May 2) is correct to say that the insensitive provision of aid can exacerbate tensions between local people and refugees. However, I cannot agree with his assertion that aid agencies seem so intent on the welfare of refugees that the plight of poverty-stricken Zaireans may be overlooked.

Oxfam has worked alongside poor people in Zaire for more than 30 years. That work has been deeply rooted in a dynamic partnership with local Zaireans battling their way out of grinding poverty. Even when we launched a massive aid effort to keep hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees alive we continued our work with local Zaireans. That work has now expanded.

Aid agencies did not prevent refugees returning home two years ago.

British beef

From Mr Peter Dalheimer

Sir, Surely Mr D. T. Y. Curry, Chairman of the Meat and Livestock Commission (letter, May 2), should, in the interest of the meat industry, outline in detail how the "high standards of beef production" in Britain are put into practice. The European consumer is still not reassured. Nor is the British consumer convinced that such standards are actually adhered to.

Mr Curry rightly believes that Britain should — as part of the EU — be able to export its beef without trade barriers. This principle applies to all European beef producers. I am sure Mr Franz Fischer, the European Commissioner for Agriculture, is keen to listen to substantiated claims about

the supposed inferiority of beef imported into the UK. It would help the meat industry in Britain if Mr Curry could convincingly demonstrate that adherence to standards is rigorously and effectively policed.

I understand the Labour Party have long proposed the setting up of an independent authority concerned with the implementation of agreed standards in all elements of the meat industry — from the farmer to the butcher. This would gain the respect of the European consumer and enable the resumption of exports as a quality partner in Europe.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID BRYER,
Director, Oxfam UK and Ireland,
274 Banbury Road, Oxford,
May 2.

School inspections

From Mr Mike Douse

Sir, In order to reduce teacher stress, the Reverend Simon Foulkes (letter, May 5) proposes that schools should be subjected to "unannounced inspections". I have long felt that an alternative approach might be to tell, say, 1,000 schools that they might be inspected in, say, six months' time and in the event to inspect only, say, ten. Probably this could only be done once.

Yours faithfully,
MIKE DOUSE (Author,
Ofsted and Onward, CIBT Education Services, Reading, 1996),
4 Laureston Terrace,
Norwich, Norfolk,
May 5.

From the Reverend Peter Cheesman

Sir, Mr Foulkes makes a good point.

I am a governor of two schools: one has had an inspection; the other awaits a date for an inspection. Anxiety and disruption are unnecessary features of both events.

It used to be said that the auditor was a "watchdog, not a bloodhound". The perception is that Ofsted is a "bloodhound, not a watchdog" with an implied purpose to hunt down its guilty quarry.

Yours faithfully,
P. CHEESMAN,
The Vicarage,
Frampton-on-Severn,
Gloucestershire,
May 5.

Venice faces a possible disaster

From the Chairman of the Venice in Peril Fund

Sir, Just over 30 years ago, on November 4-5, 1966, Venice faced the worst floods, and with them the greatest physical danger, in all its history. The city is now confronted by a new threat, potentially still more catastrophic.

The Italian oil and gas company Agip has applied for government permission to drill for natural gas in the bed of the northern Adriatic. Such further exploitation of the region may well induce serious subsidence, both in and around the Venetian lagoon and beneath Venice itself.

In the past century, owing largely to the rise in sea level and the extraction of water in neighbouring Porto Marghera during the 1950s and 60s, the city has already sunk 21cm; the College of Engineers in the Veneto — who understand the situation as well as anyone alive — believe, on the basis of previous experience offshore from Ravenna and in the Po estuary, that the proposed exploitation might eventually cause subsidence of another 30cm which, they rightly maintain, would mean the death of Venice and Chioggia.

The college also challenges the company's claim that any subsidence in the area could be corrected by the injection of sea water. Nowhere in the world has such technology been attempted in similar conditions. In an area as sensitive and vulnerable as the Venetian lagoon, where land and sea already maintain a uniquely delicate balance, any intervention on the scale proposed could trigger off a geological and hydrological chain reaction, the consequences of which are unforeseeable but might easily be disastrous.

Such a risk cannot be taken.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN JULIUS NORWICH,
Chairman,
The Venice in Peril Fund,
Suite 2-3, Morley House,
314-322 Regent Street, W1,
May 6.

Politics and farmers

From Mr Montague Keen

Sir, Mr P. C. Thompson is right to say (letter, May 3) that the National Farmers' Union supported Conservative MPs between the two world wars; but by the end of the Second World War that had ceased to be the case.

As head of the NFU's parliamentary and legal department from 1957 to 1969, I also spent a few minutes annually as secretary of its political fund committee, in which capacity I made it clear that the fund would be used only over my dead body to sponsor MPs — a view which had been taken by my predecessor (John F. Phillips, QC) in the previous postwar years.

It was this policy that helped to ensure cordial relations between the NFU and all the main political parties.

The political fund, established in the desolate years which followed the sudden abandonment of agricultural support shortly after the First World War, was used to support only a handful of MPs. It disappeared long ago.

Yours faithfully,
MONTAGUE KEEN,
School Barn Farm,
Pentlow,
Sudbury, Suffolk,
May 3.

Left, right, left...

From Mr Peter Wade

Sir, Don't you just hate those pedantic military buffs who lead such sad lives that they have to nitpick over details?

Your picture of Helen Baxendale as the lesbian military policewoman in the Channel 4 film *The Investigator* (Television choice, May 6) shows her with her beret on incorrectly.

As any schoolboy knows, the British Army has its badge over the left eye. If in fact you got the picture round the wrong way you are in good company. *Soldier* magazine recently apologised for doing something similar. They, of course, have no excuse.

Yours pedantically,
P. R. WADE,
70 Heath Road,
Lexden, Colchester, Essex,
May 6.

Hogging the road

From Mr A. J. Potter

Sir, I commend to Mr Robert Mudie (letter, May 6) the adage: "Patience is a virtue we admire in the driver behind but abhor in the driver in front."

Yours faithfully,
A. J. POTTER,
51 Langdon Street,
Tring, Hertfordshire,
May 6.

From Mr J. B. Gough

Sir, There are only three types of drivers — those that go too slow, those that go too fast, and oneself.

Yours faithfully,
J. B. GOUGH,
5 Ditching Road,
Brighton, East Sussex,
May 6.

Will you please come to see us at 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

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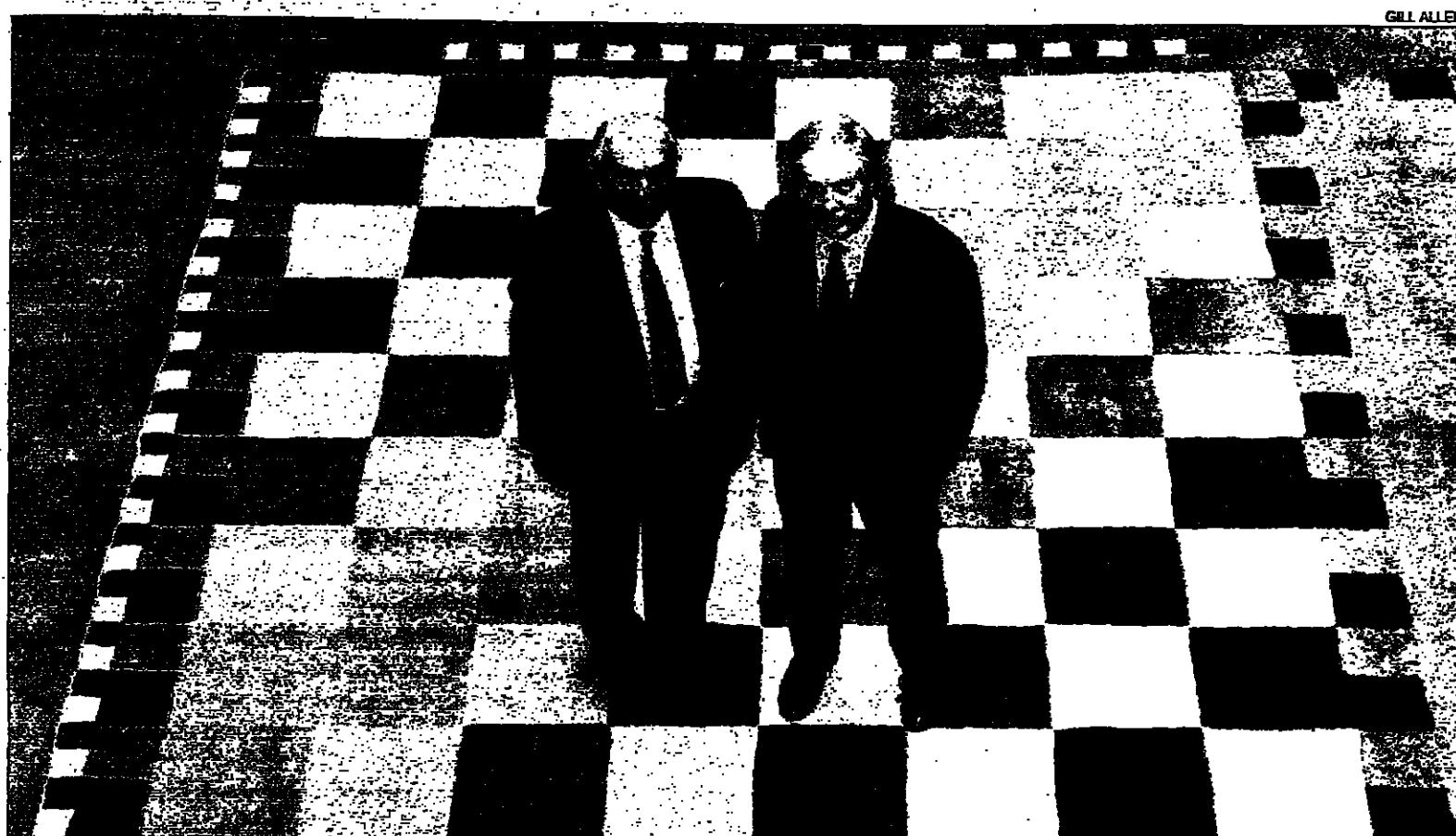
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY MAY 8 1997



Square deal: Sir Ronald Hampel, left, chairman, with Charles Miller Smith, chief executive, yesterday after announcing "a new ICI for a new century"

ICI planning sell-offs to fund £5bn Unilever deal

By OLIVER AUGUST

ICI, the chemicals group, has embarked on a three-year £3 billion disposal programme to finance the £5 billion acquisition of Unilever's specialty chemicals business.

Sir Ronald Hampel, chairman of ICI, said: "Today's deal creates nothing less than a new ICI for the new century." The acquisition was masterminded by Charles Miller Smith, the chief executive, who spent ten years at Unilever building up the specialty chemicals activities before moving to ICI two years ago. He said the Unilever deal broadened the scope of ICI's

global business, shifting its portfolio towards less cyclical light-end chemicals.

Yesterday's acquisition is the biggest corporate change for ICI since the Zeneca demerger five years ago.

The £3 billion disposal programme includes a global offering of its 62.4 per cent stake in ICI Australia, valued at about £1.1 billion based on Tuesday's share price.

The disposals also include a plan to sell the Tioxide pigment business, which is expected to yield about £700 million. Originally Tioxide was to be floated but ICI is now prepared to consider a trade sale after expressions of interest. The group refused to

name which other operations it intended to sell.

Unilever's specialty chemicals businesses comprise four international units. The biggest is National Starch, a producer of industrial adhesives and resins. The unit had operating profit of about £213 million on sales of £1.56 billion in 1996. James Kennedy, president of National Starch, will join the ICI board.

The other units are Quest International, a fragrance, food ingredient and flavour company based in The Netherlands, which had operating profit of £69 million on sales of £696 million last year; Unichema, a Dutch oleochemicals and nickel catalysts

company, which had a 1996 operating profit of £43 million on sales of £476 million; and Croscell, based in Britain, a producer of inorganic chemicals with a 1996 operating profit of £32 million on sales of £225 million.

The £5 billion deal is expected to be completed in the summer, conditional on regulatory consent and shareholder approval. Unilever, advised by Lazard Brothers, announced its intention to sell the division in February.

Mr Miller Smith said that ICI first looked at the Unilever division "almost 12 months ago to the week". The acquisition was "a genuinely unique opportunity to change ICI and

create a lot of value". Over an 18-month search for a means to diversify ICI, the Unilever businesses "kept cropping up as the best candidate".

Commenting on the new businesses, Sir Ronald said: "I'd be very disappointed if we don't see a faster sales growth rate than the 6 to 7 per cent per annum seen recently."

ICI is planning further acquisitions but not of a similar size. "The character and nature of future acquisitions will be incremental," Mr Miller Smith said. "Certainly in my time as chief executive I doubt there will be another acquisition of this magnitude."

Pennington, page 27

Sainsbury to start offering mortgages

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

J SAINSBURY, the first supermarket to launch its own bank, is to begin offering mortgages and personal loans to its customers from this summer.

Dino Adriano, chief executive, revealed the plan as he announced that pre-tax profits in the year to March 8 had fallen 15 per cent to £151 million, before exceptional items, including exceptional charges, pre-tax profits were £609 million, compared with £712 million.

Launching the bank cost Sainsbury £6.3 million. The bank is expected to lose a further £15 million this year. Mr Adriano also said that preparing the company's computers for the millennium would cost £40 million. Half of that will come in the current year.

The unexpectedly high millennium and bank costs led some analysts to lower their profit forecasts for the current year. SBC Warburg, Sainsbury's own stockbroker, shifted down from £728 million to £690 million. UBS, by contrast, moved up from £660 million to £685 million, while BZW sat tight at £675 million.

The company's shares, which took a battering in the first three months of this year after a profit warning, edged up 3p to 349p on news that current trading was above average for the sector. In the first half of last year, like-for-like sales were up 3.2 per cent. This rose to 3.7 per cent in the second half and is currently at 4.2 per cent. The current sector average is between 3 and 3.5 per cent, while the company reckons that inflation is about 1.5 per cent.

David McCarthy, food retail analyst at BZW, pointed out that some of the sales growth came from store exten-

sions, while Sainsbury's had also benefited more than some other supermarkets from recent petrol price inflation. The company said that last year's petrol price war, which has now ended, had taken £23 million off net profits.

Mr Adriano said that Sainsbury's would not go all out to regain its number one spot from Tesco at any cost. "We are certainly not setting market share as our goal in the medium or long term. Being the biggest is not always consistent with being the best," he said. Gross margins were stable and showed no changes of change.

Any threat of an all-out price war appeared to recede as Sainsbury's said it was concentrating on offering lower prices for "key items" rather than across its whole range.

Mr Adriano said that if Sainsbury's Bank, which is a joint venture with Bank of Scotland, found it had to repossess any mortgaged property, each case would be considered at board level. But he said that it should not happen often: "We are very pleased with the Bank of Scotland's approach which is very diligent and careful."

Sainsbury's Bank currently offers credit cards and savings accounts. The bank has opened 150,000 accounts in the first ten weeks of operation. The results included exceptional costs of £50 million for the conversion of Texas DIY stores to Homebase.

Earnings per share were 22p (26.8p). The company is paying a final dividend of 8.8p (8.7p), payable on July 25, giving a full year dividend of 12.3p (12.1p).

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BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

| | | |
|----------------|----------|-----------|
| FTSE 100 | 4537.5 | (+18.2) |
| Yield | 3.57% | |
| FTSE All share | 2713.9 | (+6.54) |
| Nikkei | 20048.90 | (-132.02) |
| New York | 7182.78 | (-2.54) |
| Dow Jones | 825.25 | (-2.51) |
| S&P Composite | | |

| US RATE | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Federal Funds | 5 1/8% (5 1/8%) |
| Long Bond | 96 1/2% (96 1/2%) |
| Yield | 6.93% (6.89%) |

| LONDON MONEY | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 3 month interbank | 6 1/4% (6 1/4%) |
| 6 month interbank | 11 3/4% (11 3/4%) |

STERLING

| | | |
|----------|--------|----------|
| New York | 1.6365 | (1.6332) |
| London | | |
| \$ | 1.6365 | (1.6366) |
| DM | 2.9118 | (2.9119) |
| FF | 9.4929 | (9.5185) |
| Sfr | 2.3874 | (2.3961) |
| Yen | 204.51 | (205.24) |
| E index | 109.2 | (109.8) |

DOLLAR

| | | |
|---------|--------|----------|
| London | | |
| DM | 1.7218 | (1.7245) |
| DM | 5.8068 | (5.8150) |
| Sfr | 1.4627 | (1.4625) |
| Yen | 125.04 | (125.38) |
| S index | 105.2 | (105.4) |

Tokyo close Yen 125.65

NORTH SEA OIL

Brand 15-day (Jul) \$18.30 (\$18.15)

GOLD

London close \$340.95 (\$342.85)

* denotes midday trading price

Sales drive

Toyota, the Japanese car manufacturer, is to invest £260 million on expanding its British engine and car body operations for a sales assault on Europe. The move will create an extra 550 jobs, taking the total of workers in Britain to 3,000.

Page 26

Sour note

Sate & Lyle, the sugar and sweeteners group, suffered a setback in its latest half year of trading. The blow helped to reduce pre-tax profits from £168 million to £30 million.

Page 30, Tempos 28

BIB will usher in digital boom

By ERIC REGULY

THE launch of British Interactive Broadcasting will open a market for new digital products worth billions of pounds a year, say electronics makers.

BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster that owns 32.5 per cent of BIB, has placed orders for a million digital set-top boxes worth an estimated £500 million. Viewers will need the boxes to receive BIB's interactive services, such as home banking and shopping, and BSkyB's new digital entertainment and sports channels.

BSkyB is 40 per cent owned by The News Corporation, parent company of The Times. BIB's other shareholders are British Telecom, also with 32.5 per cent, and Matsushita, the Japanese electronics company, with 15 per cent.

The set-top boxes are to be made by Matsushita, Amstrad, Pace Micro Technology and a partnership formed by Hyundai of Korea and Grundig, one of Germany's largest consumer electronics groups. Koen Van Driel, chairman of Grundig UK, said the creation of BIB and next year's launch of BSkyB's digital channels will trigger the rapid development of widescreen digital TVs. In the UK alone, this market "could be worth a few billion pounds" a year, he said.

BSkyB reported pre-tax profits of £215 million, up 21 per cent, in the nine months to March 31, on turnover of £913 million, up 24 per cent.

Tempos, page 28

Sutherland to succeed Simon as BP chairman

By OLIVER AUGUST

PETER SUTHERLAND, the former Director-General of Gatt, will succeed Sir David Simon as the chairman of British Petroleum. The appointment is made on an interim basis after Sir David's resignation yesterday to become competition minister in the new Labour Government.

Another senior appointment from industry is due to be confirmed in the next few days when Lord Hollick, chief executive of United News & Media, becomes special adviser to Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade. The unpaid post will take about a day a week of Lord Hollick's time.

There is speculation that Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General, may also appoint a special adviser from industry. Among names mentioned have been Bob Ayling, chief executive of British Airways, and Lord Chandos, a merchant banker who sits as a Labour peer.



Sutherland: interim basis

BP said that the board will consider the appointment of a long-term successor to Sir David in due course. Mr Sutherland has been a deputy chairman of BP since 1995 and is also chairman of Goldman Sachs. The US investment bank said Mr Sutherland will not resign its chairmanship.

Mr Sutherland has been Attorney-General of the Irish Republic and was European

Commissioner with responsibility for competition policy in the 1980s. He was a non-executive director of BP between 1990 and 1993, when he resigned to become Director-General of Gatt and later of the World Trade Organisation. He relinquished this post in 1995 and rejoined BP.

Speculation as to who will eventually succeed Mr Sutherland will centre on John Browne, the chief executive. He is said to be the "reformer protégé" of Sir David. Mr Browne won admiration throughout BP when he successfully restructured the exploration business, which is at the heart of BP's operations. About half the workforce lost their jobs in the restructuring. It is believed that Mr Browne, if not appointed himself, would reject the hiring of a well-known oil expert, in the vein of Sir David, as chairman. After Sir David's departure, Mr Browne is the undisputed power at BP.

Pennington, page 27

Output fall catches market out

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

MANUFACTURING output unexpectedly slipped back in March presenting the Bank of England with a dilemma when its reformed monetary policy committee meets for the first time next month.

Manufacturing output declined 0.1 per cent in March, compared with a rise of 0.2 per cent in February. The annual rate of increase also dropped sharply from 1.7 to 1.4 per cent.

Andrew Gales, UK economist at UBS, predicted the Bank would leave rates on hold for the moment because of the prospect of some fiscal tightening in the Government's mini-Budget scheduled for July.

The pound slipped from Tuesday's post-ERM high against the mark of DM2.822 to DM2.8126. But shares hit a second consecutive record, the FTSE 100 rose 18.2 to close at 4537.5. Overall industrial output fell 0.1 per cent, with the annual rate declining from 1.3 per cent in February to 0.5 per cent in March.

SFO closes Rom Data file

By ROBERT MILLER

A POLICE investigation into alleged corruption over the way in which more than £100 million of taxpayers' money was poured into companies in the South West that subsequently crashed has been closed with no arrests being made.

The Serious Fraud Office inquiry, Operation Gale, was launched after Rom Data, a failed West Country computer firm, received an £850,000 grant, even though the trade department was aware that one of the directors had a troubled financial background.

John Dawson, a former Conservative city councillor in Bath, had a history of bad debts in Britain and the Caribbean. But the DTI had to admit at a later date that government officials responsible for appraising Rom Data's grant application "were not aware" that Mr Dawson was a discharged bankrupt even though that information was held by the Insolvency Service, a Government agency.

During the inquiry it emerged that Sebastian Coe, the athlete and recently defeated Conservative MP, acting in his capacity as the local constituency member, had intervened on Rom Data's

behalf to secure some funding after the firm ran into difficulties.

Gary Streeter, the re-elected Conservative MP for Plymouth Sutton, was also the subject of complaints by local Labour councillors after Foot and Bowden, the law firm of which he was a partner, appeared to have sold a number of the "off-the-shelf" companies that received grants and then failed. This is a legitimate business, and Mr Streeter was cleared of any wrongdoing by the Law Society's independent complaints bureau.

Continued on page 26, col 5

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Mortgage flexibility for business people



GEC signs deals with Thomson bidders

By OLIVER AUGUST

GEC expects to merge parts of its defence business with Thomson-CSF, the French electronics group due to be privatised. GEC has signed agreements with Alcatel and Lagardere, the two French groups bidding for Thomson-CSF, after its own bid was rejected by the French Government last month.

Combining some GEC-Marconi businesses with parts of Thomson-CSF will create a new dominant force in the European defence sector.

The two memoranda of understanding signed by GEC commit the group to hold discussions only. Possible merger details have not been worked out. But all three groups and the French Government have said they favour the creation of a single vehicle comprising British and French defence electronics interests, giving the combined group the clout to compete against American defence giants such as Lockheed Martin on more equal terms.

Lord Prior, the chairman of GEC, said the memoranda gave GEC "a very important position in any reorganisation of the European defence electronics industry which is so essential to compete in world markets".

Alcatel and Lagardere yesterday filed their final offers. Thomson-CSF, Alcatel said it made a joint bid with Dassault Industries, the French aerospace group, and hoped that Aerospatiale, another French aerospace group, would join if it was the winner. GEC already has joint ventures with both Alcatel and Lagardere.

The French Government is selling its 58 per cent stake in Thomson-CSF after abandoning an attempt last year to sell Thomson SA, the parent company, which also owns Thomson Multimedia, the consumer electronics group. The discussions with the winner are expected to start next month.



Ann Iverson, the American chief executive of Laura Ashley. Her pay has risen while the share value has plummeted

Iverson in £1m pay league

ANN IVERSON, chief executive of Laura Ashley, saw her pay increase by 21 per cent, to more than £1 million last year, while the company's shares nearly halved in value. The pay of Jim Walsh, finance director, rose 80 per cent to £648,000, boosted by a £350,000 annual bonus (Sarah Cunningham writes).

Mrs Iverson earned £1,071,000 in the year to January 25, up from £883,000 in the 1995 annual report. Her basic salary of £409,000 was supplemented by a £525,000 bonus, £50,000 in benefits, a £50,000 contribution to her personal insurance plan, and a £82,000 housing allowance. She also received £85,000 in pension contributions.

The fall in the company's share price to 105p, particularly after a profit warning two weeks ago, has wiped out any paper gains on the 5.7 million share options that Mrs Iverson, an American, was granted when she joined two years ago. They are exercisable at 109p.

Toyota investing extra £260m in UK to lift European sales

FROM KEVIN EASON IN BRUSSELS

TOYOTA is to invest a total of £260 million, expanding its British operations for a sales assault on Europe, it was announced yesterday.

The company is spending £60 million to double output of engines, to 300,000 a year, from its plant on Deeside in North Wales. That will supply the assembly plant at Burnaston in Derbyshire, which will

start production of a new car, the Corolla, next year. Toyota is spending £200 million expanding the site at Burnaston in preparation for assembling the car. Toyota will create 550 extra jobs at Deeside and Burnaston, taking the number of workers in the UK to 3,000.

Hiroshi Okuda, president of Toyota, yesterday unveiled the new Corolla that will spearhead the Japanese manufacturers' effort to raise European sales from 400,000

a year to 600,000 by 2000, when Burnaston is running at full capacity.

Mr Okuda, speaking on a visit to Toyota's European headquarters in Brussels, underlined Britain's strategic importance to the company's European ambitions. He said: "Europe is a central emphasis in our global strategy. We are aiming for a sales target of 600,000 automobiles in Europe by the turn of the century. We launched the new

Corolla this summer and next year our UK plant will begin producing Corollas."

However, the president said that there was no decision yet on whether Burnaston will build a third model, a revolutionary small car to replace the current Starlet model.

Earlier this year Mr Okuda was quoted as giving warning that Britain would lose investment in the new model, worth an estimated £250 million, if it was not a member of European monetary union. But he stepped back from his hard line yesterday, apparently relaxed about the intentions in Europe of the new Labour government.

The single currency was just one factor in the decision, influencing where Toyota sited the third model," he said.

France is lobbying hard for the car while Poland is also in the frame. But Burnaston remains favourite to win the investment. The car is likely to go on sale in 2000.

built overseas were 65 per cent of all new registrations in April, up from 61.38 per cent a year ago. Ford's share of the new car market was down to 18 per cent last month, against 19.1 per cent in April last year. Vauxhall was at 14.1 per cent (15.2 per cent) and Rover at 9.9 per cent (10.3 per cent).

Car spending surprises industry

By KEVIN EASON

CAR buyers embarked on a surprise pre-election spending spree last month, lifting motor industry sales by more than 12 per cent.

Sales jumped to 182,747, up by 20,139 on April 1996, according to figures issued yesterday

by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

Ernie Thompson, the society's chief executive, said that the increase came from private buyers drawn to showrooms by millions of pounds spent by manufacturers on discounts and advertising. The motor industry tradition-

ally enjoys an upturn in the spring, but executives were surprised by the strong return of buyers to showrooms.

The April rise kept car sales on a strong upward trend, ahead 5.5 per cent in the first four months of this year compared with the same period of 1996, to reach 732,281. Models

built overseas were 65 per cent of all new registrations in April, up from 61.38 per cent a year ago.

Ford's share of the new car market was down to 18 per cent last month, against 19.1 per cent in April last year. Vauxhall was at 14.1 per cent (15.2 per cent) and Rover at 9.9 per cent (10.3 per cent).

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Lamfalussy welcomes revamp of Bank

THE European Union's senior banker yesterday gave a warm welcome to the Government's revamp of the Bank of England. "It was music to my ears," said Alexandre Lamfalussy, head of the European Monetary Institute, joining in the chorus of the delight in Brussels over Gordon Brown's decision to let the Bank set interest rates on its own. He added: "Maastricht or no Maastricht, it's a good thing. I think this is a very major step towards compliance with the treaty's objectives," he said.

Mr Brown is to face his first European test on Monday when he attends this month's session of ECOFIN, the ministerial council which runs the EU's monetary and economic policy. Thread-watching, page 29

Willis silent on merger

WILLIS CORROON, the international insurance broker, acknowledged yesterday that a new breed of powerful American brokers were "formidable competitors". But John Rowe, executive chairman, declined to comment on speculation that Willis might join forces with Sedgwick, its UK rival. Its shares fell 4p to 144p after the company said pre-tax profits fell £24 million to £45.7 million in the quarter to March 31. The quarterly dividend was held at 1.65p.

Villa goes behind

SHARES in Aston Villa made a lacklustre debut yesterday, closing at a 30p discount to the £11 issue price on the first day of dealings. The closing price values the Premiership club at £122.5 million. Villa will have raised more than £15 million from the flotation, a large part of which will go towards buying new players to strengthen manager Brian Little's squad. Paying for two new giant video screens at Villa Park should account for most of the cash left over.

Amvesco doubles

AMVESCO, the investment company formerly known as Invesco, nearly doubled funds under management to \$160 billion in the first quarter of the year, largely because of the completion in February of the merger with AIM Management Group of the US, which managed assets of \$64.7 billion. The group saw income in the first three months leap to \$84.8 million, a \$34.8 million rise. Pre-tax profits nearly doubled to \$29.7 million (£15.3 million), while earnings per share rose 1.1p to 5.3p.

PW stakes for fees plan

PRICE WATERHOUSE, the accountant, is to take equity stakes in lieu of fees in ailing companies that it is called upon to turn around. Senior businessmen are being recruited to the venture, which marks a new chapter in the development of the corporate rescue culture. Price Waterhouse will work on a success-fee basis. Partners are additionally expected to back a fund that will be available for investment in underperforming companies. Accountancy, page 30

Downpace sale agreed

THE Electronics Boutique has agreed to sell Downpace, a giftware designing business, to Toy Options for £304,000. The company moved into the black last year, with a pre-tax profit of £495,000 for the year to January 31, against a loss of £8.51 million last time. Earnings were 0.19p a share (4.83p loss) and there is no dividend. Shares of Toy Options gained 14p to 110p, while shares of Electronics Boutique eased 1p to 23p.

Caution by Bellway

BELLWAY, the housebuilder, has cautioned against reports of a boom in the housing market, saying its prices increased only 2 per cent in the last year. The company said the recovery outside London was steady. It paid off three-quarters of its borrowings in the six months to January 31, helping a 12 per cent rise in turnover translate into a 49 per cent jump in pre-tax profits, to £17.9 million. Earnings were 10.9p a share (7.4p). The 2.7p interim (2.55p) is due on July 1.

TOURIST RATES

| Bank | Bank | Bank | Bank |
|--------------|--------|-----------------|--------|
| Australia \$ | 2.50 | Malta | 0.663 |
| Austria Sch | 2.70 | Netherlands Gld | 3.342 |
| Belgium Fr | 61.00 | New Zealand \$ | 2.54 |
| Canada \$ | 2.276 | Norway Kr | 1.251 |
| Cyprus Cyp | 0.877 | Portugal Esc | 204.80 |
| Denmark Kr | 1.224 | Spain Ptas | 166.64 |
| Finland Mkk | 9.00 | Sweden Kr | 20.48 |
| France Fr | 9.51 | Switzerland Fr | 1.736 |
| Germany Dm | 2.360 | Taiwan NT | 23.76 |
| Greece Dr | 471 | Turkey Lira | 20.34 |
| Hong Kong \$ | 1.327 | USA \$ | 1.736 |
| Ireland P | 1.13 | Yugoslavia D | 20.34 |
| Italy Lira | 2.360 | | |
| Japan Yen | 218.10 | | |

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THE TIMES

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Take the voucher, below, plus token one from yesterday's Times to Rock Circus, Piccadilly, London. When you purchase one full-paying adult ticket, you will be admitted with one child at no extra charge. (A child is 16 and under.) Tickets are: adult £7.95, child £5.50. This offer is valid until May 31, 1997. For opening times, please call 0171-734 7203.

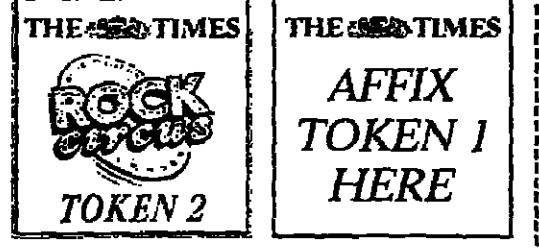
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Mr/Ms/Ms/Ms... First name
Surname
Address
Postcode Day Tel (inc STD code)

OFFER CONDITIONS 1. The offer is valid for one child free when accompanied by one adult paying the full price. 2. The offer applies up to May 31, 1997. 3. Each voucher must be accompanied by two Times/Rock Circus tokens. 4. No photocopies of vouchers or tokens will be accepted. 5. There is no restriction on how many attractions you may visit. 6. You can get more than one free child ticket by purchasing extra newspapers and by buying an accompanying full-price adult ticket. 7. Tokens not for resale and cannot be exchanged for cash. 8. Vouchers may not be used in conjunction with any other discount offer or concession rate. 9. If you would prefer not to receive information and offers from organisations carefully selected by The Times, please tick ☐

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Which national can you be contacted by? ☐ By post ☐ By phone ☐ By fax ☐ By email
Which national can you be contacted by? ☐ By post ☐ By phone ☐ By fax ☐ By email



No arrests after Rom Data inquiry

Continued from page 25

The SFO said last night: "We conducted a thorough investigation with the Devon and Cornwall fraud squad into the affairs of Rom Data Corporation. However, we have not found sufficient evidence to bring criminal charges against anyone in this case."

Inquiries by The Times have established that the SFO, which extended its initial Rom Data investigation to include dozens of other failed companies in the region, concluded that there was no realistic chance of securing a criminal

prosecution against any individual. Some of the companies which received state-funded grants were named in a damning 150-page secret DTI report and included Pan Atlantic, Porthcurno Management and South West Farm Processors. David Jamieson, the Labour MP for Plymouth Devonport, has campaigned for the DTI report to be published and he is expected to continue his battle in the new Parliament. The DTI is believed to have disciplined certain officials who have left the department on early retirement or redundancy terms.

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NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to the provisions of the Trustee Act 1925, that the undersigned, being the trustees of the trust created by the will of the late Mr. John William Smith, do hereby certify that the said will has been proved to the satisfaction of the High Court of Justice, and that the said trustees are duly constituted and are acting in accordance with the provisions of the said will.

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□ Appointment could raise doubts over Chinese walls □ Concern at business leaders jumping the fence □ An idea has its day

□ GORDON BROWN must still be basking in the double delight of having taken the City by surprise and won its approbation. But as a degree of clarity returns to the thought processes of those stunned by his plans to reform the Bank of England, a few qualms are beginning to niggle.

Mr Brown's declared intention to lift the issue of interest rates right out of the political arena was destined to meet with instant gratitude from the business world. His insistence that there should be no new incarnation of the Ken and Eddie show underscored his professed determination to prevent the personalising of debate over something so serious as interest.

A noble plan but not the easiest to implement. For while Mr Brown, in contrast with his jolly predecessor, may have mastered the art of keeping personality in check, he may find it difficult to people the Bank with a band of similar souls.

The essence of Mr Brown's plan is the new Bank of England committee which is to determine interest rates. On it will sit a new Deputy Governor and four new government appointees. There may be a collection of apologetic individuals now volunteering for the posts. Yet the intelligence in the Square Mile is loudly proclaiming that the front runner for

the vital Deputy Governor's role, which also includes overseeing the Bank's role in monetary policy, is one Gavyn Davies.

The bearded Mr Davies, chief economist at Goldman Sachs, is said to be prepared to give up his whopping City salary in return for a role at the Bank, one which it is predicted could see him succeeding Governor Eddie George before very long.

A willingness to make such a personal sacrifice in the national interest should not be snubbed, but the appointment of Mr Davies could raise doubts over whether Mr Brown had succeeded in his quest for a Chinese wall around interest rate policy. For Mr Davies is no stranger to the close knit core of the Blair administration. There is no secrecy surrounding the fact that his wife, Sue Nye, is Gordon Brown's assistant, but it surely raises a problem of perception, if not fact, in the possible appointment of her husband.

For Downing Street has been taken over by a new first family which extends well beyond Tony,

Cherie and the three photogenic children, who know the spin-doctoring Mr Mandelson as "Uncle Peter". However strong his credentials as an economist, Mr Davies will be perceived as being remarkably close to that family. And as Mr Mandelson knows, perception is all.

And he should also note that while it is widely perceived Mr Davies has a good mind and a capacity for thorough research, his high ranking in City surveys owes more to high profile than accurate forecasting.

Labour relations

□ FUNNY, all these hard-headed businessmen, veterans of a decade or more of firing and downsizing, who are now queuing up to help Tony Blair. One might have thought the man chosen to replace Sir Bob Horton at BP would be in the same ruthless Thatcherite mould, but Sir David Simon is now well placed at the top of any list of Labour-luvvies.



from-business. His Europhile credentials seem to have clinched him the job of full-time adviser to the Treasury and Department of Trade and Industry. Businessmen are by nature Euro-inclined — think of those wearying CBI surveys about the importance of joining the common currency, right now — because they tend to disregard airy notions like national sovereignty. But, as a sort of mirror image to the fuss about Tory ministers who engineered this or that privatisation and then joined the board, there is legitimate concern about business leaders jumping over the fence to new Labour.

First, we tend to expect well-

paid executives to work all the hours God sends, not indulge in esoteric and time-consuming hobbies. BP's board takes this view. There can be no financial benefit to the company in having someone so close to the reins of power. In other parts of the world this is called corruption.

Any executive so seconded should have to stand aside from his real job, as Sir David has. The cost-benefit analysis can then be left to them. Business leaders themselves seem to feel that such political connections add personal lustre — one remembers Lord Sterling, who spent almost a decade radiant in glory at Mrs Thatcher's right hand. The main beneficiaries must surely be the recipients of the advice, in this case a new Government with little experience of running anything. The Conservatives' problem was that they were there too long, and ignored any messages from the outside world. Just think of the trouble that could have been avoided. Any competent businessman would have advised against the

poll tax, even if the above Europhilia might not have spared us the exchange-rate mechanism. And all would have given warning against allowing your ministers to take gifts from wealthy men in search of citizenship.

ICI research pays off

□ WHEN Niall Fitzgerald recently revealed his plans for taking Unilever out of speciality chemicals, he omitted to mention that it was all the bright idea of a former Unilever executive, Charles Miller Smith. But that was the tale as told yesterday by Mr CMS, who, after nearly two years as chief executive of ICI, is paying Unilever nearly £5 billion to help with the company's restructuring.

Mr Fitzgerald may not be thrilled with the purchaser's ebullient insistence that selling the businesses piecemeal would have brought Unilever "significantly more, but, apart from that quibble, this does have the look of a deal that works for both sides.

Miller Smith has maintained a remarkably low profile since arriving at Millbank, but it now appears he has been plotting carefully: he first approached Unilever a year ago. He knows what he has bought and insists that it is real quality.

The benefits to ICI may go beyond the non-dilutive earnings. While his predecessors at ICI had made inroads into shaking up the bureaucratic culture, Miller Smith has made clear his views that the process was by no means complete. With the Unilever management coming on board, he believes he will now have an international gene pool of talent to fish in to equip ICI for the next century.

Fitzgerald is not bemoaning the fact that he swallowed the bait.

Take-home trade

□ BUYING a house in Britain is an unnecessarily cumbersome process, but the idea of picking up a mortgage at the supermarket is unlikely to make it any simpler. Neither is it likely to persuade happy householders to be loyal grocery buyers. Instead, it raises the nasty spectre of the grocer having to reprocess a customer's home. Marks & Spencer avoided mortgage lending for that very reason.

Whitbread courts older customers as profits top £300m

By FRASER NELSON

WHITBREAD, the brewing and leisure group, is to invest £500 million in its broad portfolio of businesses this year, targeting older customers.

The company plans to open 250 outlets, in part to increase its share of the market for over-50s, which it expects to outperform the market for young people.

David Thomas, chief executive designate, said that the company — which spent £180 million on acquisitions last year — is now happy with its portfolio of businesses.

He said: "We must ask ourselves who is going to fill our pubs in the future. People are getting older, and are taking more control over their lifestyles. They have more money now, and they want to spend it. Older people did not use to see pubs as somewhere pleasant that they could spend money, but, by providing the sort of food that they enjoy, we are making inroads into the market."

Mr Thomas said that the popularity of Whitbread's



Thomas opening outlets.

Beefeater chain among older people was shown by subscription levels for its Emerald Card — a loyalty scheme for over-55s — now held by more than a million people.

Last year's acquisitions helped pre-tax profits to grow to an expected £303 million for the year to March 1, against £286 million for the previous 53 weeks. Earnings per share rose to 50.8p (46.1p). A 17.55p final dividend, due on July 18, makes a total of 23.8p.

The company plans to open

44 new outlets of Café Rouge, which came with acquisition of the Pelican group last summer, and 80 themed pubs, 40 Travel Inns, 35 Costa Coffees and five new centres for David Lloyd Leisure. More than 5,000 jobs should be created.

Whitbread plans to sell Keg North America, Richardson Inns and three branded three-star hotels and some of its less profitable divisions.

Mr Thomas said that the company was not concerned about the prospect of a minimum wage. Although he would not cost the various levels, analysts forecast that the impact of a £3.50-an-hour minimum would be negligible. A £4.25 minimum, however, is expected to cost the group an extra £32 million a year.

Whitbread said that the millennium computer bug — in which tills and computers fail to recognise dates in 2000 — was not proving a problem and should have no effect on its balance sheet.

The shares rose 11½p, to 801½p.

Change at the inn, page 29

Dalgety cuts payout and issues warning

SHARES in Dalgety, the petfood and agribusiness company, fell 13.5 per cent yesterday as it gave warning of falling profits and gave notice of a cut in dividend (Sarah Cunningham writes).

The company also said that Nigel Garrow has resigned as head of the petfoods division. He is to be replaced by Hugh Donaldson, a former colleague of Sir Denys Henderson,

chairman of Dalgety, from ICI. Second-half profits are set to fall below those of the first half, when Dalgety made £43 million before tax, down 8 per cent on the previous year.

The company said that it had a disappointing third quarter because of production difficulties at its Southall petfoods plant, the impact of BSE and the strength of sterling. BSE will

cost a further £9 million this year, after having cost the company £15 million last year. Cutting costs in the petfoods division will cost about £27 million.

Richard Clothier, chief executive, said that plans for rationalisation of the petfoods division are likely to mean a 10 per cent cut in the 3,700 workforce over the next two years.

To restore cover, the final dividend

is expected to be cut to 6p, from 13.5p a year ago. This would give a total dividend of 14.5p, down from last year's 22p. The shares fell 41½p, to 269p.

Sir Denys said: "The continued underperformance of our petfoods business has led us to conclude that tough action is required to ensure that we are on track to meet our financial objectives, albeit late."

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Royal Bank eyes shoppers in Tesco credit card link

By ROBERT MILLER
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

ROYAL Bank of Scotland yesterday said there will be a July launch of a joint credit card venture with Tesco, and predicted that RBS group profits will exceed £1 billion in a few years.

George Mathewson, group chief executive of RBS, which yesterday unveiled a 23 per cent rise in interim profits to £369 million, said that the real bonus of the supermarket link with Tesco was that it gave the

bank access to 10 million shoppers who might buy financial services. He said: "The upside is very substantial and the downside very small."

RBS, which lifted its interim dividend to 6.2p, from 5.4p, has cut its cost-to-income ratio within the UK banking division to 57.5 per cent in the six months to March 31, from 61.5 per cent.

Direct Line, the telephone insurance subsidiary, contributed £8 million, up from £5 million previously. The financial services division now has

a mortgage book of £870 million and a savings base of £370 million.

Dr Mathewson restated his belief that building societies are currently overvalued by the City and predicted that more joint ventures, such as those with Banco Santander in Spain, were likely. He said: "The cost of acquisitions does seem high at present. There are better returns from investing in existing businesses."

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City Diary, page 29

Vert shares hit low on warning

By FRASER NELSON

SHARES of Jacques Vert, the troubled women's wear retailer, plunged to a low yesterday as the company said that its autumn and winter fashion range had flopped.

Although like-for-like retail sales gained 18 per cent in the last six months, it has lost £1 million in wholesale orders from House of Fraser and Selfridges. This, it gave warning, will force its losses to exceed the £5 million loss expected by the market. Analysts now expect the company to report £7 million losses.

Although the Grace Collection, the range aimed at a younger market, met expectations, the core Jacques Vert label was shunned by wholesalers who were unable to sell the summer range.

It will pull the remaining 32 of its concessions in the House of Fraser by November this year.

The shares, which have fallen from 180p since last year, dropped 13p to 26½p.

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And you can easily mix up public and private money. In a decentralised corporation, there is much to be said for top directors taking a detached, strategic role — especially for their own gilded lifestyles. Granada's Gerry Robinson, a fashionable figure for modern professional managers, reckons you can run the biggest enterprise on four days a week.

For the country's three million self-employed, the wealth-creating sector's growing army of foot soldiers, there are no ifs or buts about who is running the show. There is often no one else, except perhaps your spouse and family. There is no danger of mixing up business and family finances. They are the same. Remember please, Mr Brown, John Prescott and Mr Blair that, although these enterprises are so different from your own, there is no more important business than one on which a family depends.

The traditional family is an economically efficient care unit for the state. Anyone who has seen the impact of its decline on the social security Budget will testify to that. Families that work apart and grow apart sometimes do not help.

Similarly, for a high proportion of more than two million tiny businesses run by the self-

employed, living above the shop or working in the annexe is a huge aid to efficiency. Often, that alone makes a family-supporting enterprise viable in hard times.

Those who literally keep shops have seen their natural advantages stripped away by a series of legal and tax measures. Seven-day working laws allow multiples to rely on part-timers and undercut someone who has to earn a living. Planning laws spawned big shopping developments that exclude individuals and have stripped shops away from living quarters.

Finally, tax laws have, as if deliberately, removed the efficiency gains of living above the shop. The shop, the annexe used as an office or the garage used as a pottery or to repair mountain bikes, instead of being just part of the family property for council tax, are taxed nationally at the Uniform Business Rate. And there are

anti-business complications for capital gains and other taxes too. Even with transitional relief, this rising tax has destroyed thousands of businesses. In the search for extra revenue, the Uniform Business Rate will seem an attractive option. It could be disastrous for thousands more.

Running a business from home, or living on the premises, are lifestyles naturally set to grow as big plants shrink employment and more individual services are needed. Computers, the Internet and broadband communications will stimulate more living and working in the same place. Wearing his transport hat, Mr Prescott will note that this is the only painless way to ease travel pollution and congestion. It will only happen if the Treasury and planners help.

Last Friday, a delightful picture winged its way round the world. It showed Tony Blair, his successful wife and their three charming children on the steps of their new home at 10 Downing Street. Within about 24 hours, this turned out to be the first Big Lie of the new administration, albeit a white one and unspoken. So much of the roomy, house originally meant to be the Prime Minister's residence is now taken up with machinery of government that the remaining flat is too poky for a family with children. So the Blairs are swapping with the bachelor Chancellor next door.

Never mind. The principle remains. When you have a really important job, it pays to live above the shop. The Blairs, like John Major (and Gordon Brown, next door), have not moved in just for security reasons. A tasteful pad in Islington would be fine for most people, but when you really have to focus on the nation's business, you need to cut out that morning commuting and have your staff on hand with the morning coffee. You

gain from being physically at the heart of the action with your own finger on the pulse. Otherwise, like the Bank of England's dedicated Governor, you need to be in so early in the morning that you might as well have stayed the night. As many entrepreneurs and chief executives have discovered, running a country well, like making the most of a business, is not just a job.

The British economy, business and families have suffered much by forgetting this. Some economic historians trace the decline of the British economy all the way back to the later days of the industrial revolution, when Birmingham ironmasters started aping the gentry by building villas for their families in leafy Edgbaston. Even the influence of Rothschild's, seemingly at its zenith at the end of the 19th century, is said to have been already doomed to decline once the

family became addicted to vast country estates. Ironically, earlier landowning magnates took their eye off the ball when they started spending most of their time in big London houses.

This is not just history. Stanley Morton, who built the Abbey National Building Society from relative obscurity to eminence, ruled it from a flat perched at the top of Abbey House. That old-fashioned entrepreneur, Richard Branson controls his empire from his villa in London's Holland Park though, as a president for Mr Blair, business took over so much space that he bought the house next door to actually live in.

The late Robert Maxwell, who ran his business from his Oxford home, then used a flat at the Daily Mirror, illustrates the dangers for big business. Living above the shop is strictly for those in sole control (as Mr Blair intends to be).

Old-style pubs left behind in food and family revolution

Whitbread is at the forefront of change as brewers adapt to new leisure patterns, says Martin Waller



British pubs have altered considerably since The Rovers Return in Ena Sharples's day

There is a marvellous vignette in the film *An American Werewolf in London* when two artless American students blunder into Hollywood's idea of a British country pub. All conversation stops as the all-male drinkers glower from within a dim, dingy den at the newcomers, then gradually return to their pints and their darts.

Like most Hollywood visions of British culture, this is at least 20 years out of date. The pub from hell still exists, on the outskirts of sink housing estates and in dark, benighted corners of the inner city.

But had our American backpackers stepped into a typical public house today, they could as easily have found a bright, airy, well-furnished area, keen to welcome women and even children, serving good food and a well-kept selection of wines. It would have looked more like a restaurant than a pub of old. The transformation would have cost the owner, perhaps a big brewer or, as likely one of an entirely new breed of entrepreneurial pub chains, a six-figure sum to achieve, and they would have counted it money well spent.

Whitbread is regarded in the City as the leader among the traditional brewers at developing new brands of retail estate, and yesterday's figures give an indication why. Operating profits from the managed firms division were ahead by 14 per cent while those from the traditional tied estate of tenanted pubs fell by 23 per cent. The flagship Brewers Fayre Inns saw operating profits up by a third, helped by Whitbread's gradual churning of the estate by selling less profitable units while opening new ones.

These may not be fair comparisons — there were one-off costs on the tenanted pubs side, and the fall there more accurately reflects the 12 per cent of the estate sold since last year — but it indicates why investment in tied pubs stayed little changed at just £17 million while Whitbread ploughed back £163 million, a rise of 20 per cent into its managed firms.

Mark Pulek, drinks analyst at Merrill Lynch, says Whitbread under Peter Jarvis, its chief executive until next month, has been pre-empting for some years now at creating and running food and family-led pubs. "I think one of Peter's great qualities is marketing, and spotting growth trends in the market. For some time he has felt that the UK eating out market was immature, and the

focus of investment has been on expanding food-led concepts." This has led Whitbread into the purchase of specialist restaurant chains such as Pelican Group, for £133 million last July, and BrightReasons, owner of Pizzaland and bought for £46 million in September — and into some flak for allegedly paying over the odds for some of them, as well as for other diversifications such as David Lloyd Leisure, the chain of health clubs.

It is significant that when Mr Jarvis's successor was announced in December, he was David Thomas, head of the restaurants and leisure division. But Whitbread, five years ago, would have seemed an unlikely business to pioneer a revolution in public taste, because the company was one of the most entrenched members of the old "beverage" that slice of the aristocracy with strong Conservative Party links that controlled a huge chunk of the production, distribution and

sale of the country's beer production. Two events set the scene for the change. The issue of the "Beer Orders" in 1989 was the Government's attempt to weaken the tie between the brewers of beer such as Whitbread and the pubs that they owned and operated as a captive market for their product, and to introduce competition by opening that market to interlopers. The top six brewers were required to sell, in all, 11,000 outlets.

The Beer Orders are widely regarded as a failure, in that they failed to force down the price of a pint, one stated object, and the big brewers emerged from the exercise financially stronger, having sold the worst performers in their estates and taken huge write-offs against profits that could conveniently be blamed on government policy.

But they succeeded in introducing a whole raft of new entrants into the pubs market, which either bought outlets from the big players forced to sell and gained attractive supply deals from their brewing arms or simply started up good quality greenfield sites, a route taken by the phenomenally successful JD Wetherspoon group.

The second precursor for change at Whitbread was at Jarvis's instigation: the unravelling, starting in 1993, of the complex and outdated split share structure and cross-holding with the Whitbread Investment Company which had cast a cloud over the company's standing in the City.

The other big brewers swiftly created their own wholly owned food and family brands of pubs and restaurants, categories that in many cases blurred together and became indistinguishable. Allied Domeq has Wacky Warehouse, one of several popular park-the-kiddies-and-drink concepts, and Big Steak; Scottish & Newcastle, also respected for its managed pubs, paid

£630 million for Chef & Brewer in November 1993. This was another deal that attracted criticism for the high price paid, criticism that looks rather less well founded almost four years later.

All are riding on the back of a move away from drinking as a pastime, for health reasons, and towards social eating out. One City estimate sees this last activity growing by 3 per cent in real terms each year to the new century. Meanwhile, the trend towards having children later in life means parents are likely to be more affluent, and more able to eat out en famille.

Some pub owners have missed out — Intreprenuer, jointly owned by Grand Metropolitan and Foster's Brewing Group of Australia and the country's biggest independent chain, has very few managed houses. Almost all its pubs, down to 2,900 from 6,500 two-and-a-half years ago, are leased to tenants, who have not always enjoyed the best relations with the company over the years. They control their individual pubs, not the ultimate owner, which has precluded the creation of a themed chain.

This is where the managed pub comes into its own, and why these are at a premium compared to the traditional tied house. Intreprenuer, which hopes to float on the stock market in a couple of years' time, now has a collection of about 30 managed pubs of its own and will grow them further — perhaps, some tenants fear, at their expense.

All this ferment in the managed pub and restaurant market has tended to leave the once-core business of brewing beer in the shade. This is in part because one of the biggest issues in that area is still undecided. The £200 million sale to Bass of Carlsberg-Tetley, jointly owned by Allied Domeq and Carlsberg of Denmark, was first mooted at least 18 months ago. The matter will eventually have to be decided by the new Government.

If Labour tries to impose conditions that are too onerous on Bass in return for allowing the deal through, it could all fall apart. But Carlsberg-Tetley will still have to be sold. Whitbread has eyed the Tetley brand before, and would be an obvious buyer, adding it to Boddingtons and Stella Artois, its own key brands. It is a move that Whitbread's founding fathers might appreciate rather more than some of the recent purchases.

United States, I feel it only fair to warn of an invasion by a serious pest. We have had years of getting used to that infuriating little red telephone that is synonymous with Direct Line. Now Peter Wood, founder of the insurer, tells me that his new company, Direct Response, will launch in New York State in October — complete with that damned telephone. Mr Wood's new venture has a licence to spread to 45 other states thereafter. Doo doo diddle-dee doo.

As a young man seeking funds for The Feathers, he was once humiliated by a manager at a Lloyds Bank branch in London, and never forgot looking downcast at his feet — and the bank's garish carpet. Years later he arrived at the newly purchased Aldwych site. "There was this unbelievably hideous, typically English, carpet. I asked them to remove it immediately," he says. Then the penny dropped. He had bought the same building.

● ANOTHER day, another dose of bad luck at Triton Court. Who are the two biggest investors in Dalgety, the latest blue chip to see its shares savaged by an entirely unexpected profits warning? Step forward that well-known long-term investor PPFM, with a 19 per cent stake, and MSG, also going through a bit of a short-term sticky patch, with 13 per cent.

Hot line IN the interests of fostering our special relationship with the

Brown's revolution fires keen bout of 'Thread-watching'

Alasdair Murray on intense City speculation over the future of a reformed Bank of England

Reserve or the Bundesbank where members are drawn from among regional banks. The new system is likely to have more in common with the Bank of France where external appointees on the monetary committee have been drawn from business, finance, politics and even journalism.

The reformed monetary policy committee will be expected to face the Treasury Select Committee regularly, while the committee's proceedings — complete with voting records — will be published six weeks in arrears. The more open style has a lot in common with the

Federal Reserve Bank in America, and raises the spectre of every comment by a committee member becoming market-sensitive. Just as "Fed-watching" is a favourite Wall Street game as the market attempts to second guess the next move on interest rates, "Thread-watching" will become a full-time job for the legions of City economists and market analysts.

Mr Brown is also aiming to police the committee by increasing the impact of the Court, the Bank's governing body, which functions in a similar manner to non-executive directors. Traditionally, members have been drawn

from the ranks of the "great and the good" in the City, receiving £200 a year — unchanged since 1945 — and free lunches. Mr Brown wants to broaden the make-up of the Court, adding more industrialists, regional representatives and possibly trade unionists, while encouraging it to monitor Bank decision-making more actively.

There is also great uncertainty about how the committee members will function in relation to the Government. Treasury members will be able to attend and contribute to the monetary policy debates, as occurs in Germany, although they will have no voting rights. But Simon Briscoe, UK economist at Nikko Europe, argues that monitoring of this nature is insufficient to resolve tensions caused by splitting control of monetary and fiscal policy.

Budgets will now be planned without full knowledge of the future direction of interest rates, while the Bank in turn will amend interest rates without knowing the potential impact of fiscal changes in Budgets. In countries such as Germany this has often resulted in an excessively tight monetary policy.

But Gavin Davies argues in an article that outlined his ideas for the Bank — which bear an uncanny resemblance to the plans revealed by Mr Brown — that the Government will be able to shift the inflation target to take account of supply-side shocks. In contrast, in Germany the Bundesbank sets the inflation target and the government cannot intervene.

The UK Government will have a right to override the Bank in "exceptional circumstances", without specifying when and how this might be used. Whether the new administration will ever need its reserve powers will depend on the Government's main lever of control — the quality of its appointments to the Bank.



Managed Overdraft Rate Change

With effect from Wednesday 7th May 1997

The Co-operative Bank Managed Overdraft Rates

for small businesses will be as follows:

| | % per month |
|---------------|-------------|
| Premium Rate | 0.88 |
| Standard Rate | 0.96 |

The CO-OPERATIVE BANK

THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK PLC, HEAD OFFICE
1 BALLOON STREET, MANCHESTER M4 6ER



Wood: taking telephone to the US

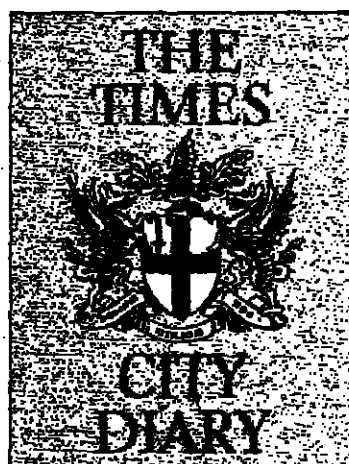
Peer hunting

ANY ATTEMPT by Labour to include City regulation in the Queen's speech, and impose a more centralised structure on all those impenetrable acronyms, will be made difficult by the shortage of House of Lords peers with the necessary commercial and financial expertise to steer the Bill past Lords Hambro, Hanson, Prior et al. There's always Clive Hollick, of course, and Richard Branson has, surprise, surprise, pushed himself

forward on to the list of possibles. But the search is on for suitable candidates. Perhaps I might suggest a couple. Arise Lord Thomas and Lord Fyfe, or Terry Thomas who retires this autumn as managing director of the Co-operative Bank and Lomax Fyfe, chairman of the Co-operative Wholesale Society.

Veterans of the War of Andrew Regan's Ego will be welcome on the Labour benches, and they would have a few things to say about the need for more regulatory control of the City, too. The Co-op movement has 26 MPs in the new administration, but only four peers. Peter Clarke, national secretary of the Co-op Party, would not comment on my suggestion but accepted the urgent need for new people in the House of Lords to plug gaps caused by death and illness.

● A TOUCHING tale of marital devotion reaches me. Tom Geimer, biotech analyst at Henry Cooke Lumsden, has rejected several blandishments to come south, preferring to stay in Manchester. He has now found a new job locally, and starts at the beginning of next month at the



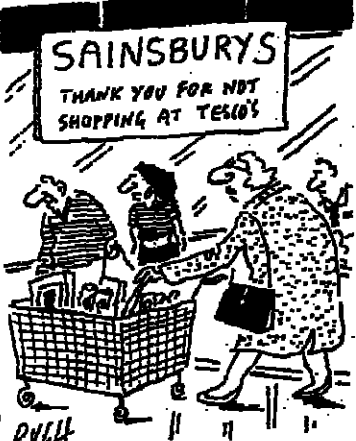
Mancunian offices opened about a year ago by Apex Partners, the merchant bank. The strange attachment of this German-trained US national to the North West is the research work carried out by Dr Eileen Paul at Manchester University into cellular molecular biology. "I'm very proud of my wife," he says. "I was asked many times to move to London. For personal reasons I would like to stay in this area."

Carpet-sweeper

AN EQUALLY touching tale of revenge by the little man over the big

Hot line

IN the interests of fostering our special relationship with the



PV44

Tate & Lyle soured by emerging markets

By ADAM JONES

THE closure of plants in Ukraine and Bulgaria, combined with a squeeze on sugar margins in China, has forced Tate & Lyle to make provision for a £35 million paper loss.

Its emerging markets problem dragged down already weak interim results, sending the shares down 5½ p to 448½ p.

The sugars and sweeteners group reported a six-month profit before tax and exceptional costs of £113.6 million, compared with £185.9 million last time. Exceptional costs pulled this down by a further £83.2 million, including £29.2 million for a planned reorganisation of its American activities and the write-off of goodwill in underperforming businesses.

This caused a paper loss of

£25.1 million in its animal feed operations, and £34.9 million in emerging markets. Exceptional profit of £6.7 million reduced the deficit.

Emerging markets are seen as central to the long-term profitability of sugar companies because of the growth in pre-packaged food.

The third big blow from emerging markets came from the refining activities in China, where the Government has raised sugar cane prices but maintained a system of unrestricted imports, squeezing margins from two sides.

Larry Pillard, Tate & Lyle chief executive since November 1996, said a team is in Bulgaria now, looking at the possibility of reopening the plant in the light of fiscal improvement.

Profits from Domino, the US sugar refiner, recovered strongly. Mr Pillard said Staley, its cereal starch and sweetener business, performed satisfactorily in relation to competitors, despite lower earnings.

Worldwide sales fell from £2.4 billion to £2.3 billion for the six months.

The company expects improved returns from North American starch and sweetener operations in the second half. Improvements, however, will be affected by continued strength of sterling, which caused the company to lose £17.3 million in the six months.

Analysts' full-year profit expectations now range from £244 million to £253 million, before exceptional costs and tax.

The company said it is declaring a foreign income dividend this year, payable on July 15, as more profit was made from overseas. Shareholders will get the underlying dividend of 5.3p, unchanged from last year, plus an extra 25 p cent to cover the extra tax faced by many UK institutions.

Tempus, page 28

Statement lifts shares in Booker

SHARES in Booker, the food production group, rose 13½ p to 323p, after a trading statement in which the group said that like-for-like cash-and-carry sales are up 5 per cent year on year.

Jonathan Taylor, chairman, also told shareholders that overall group sales, including Nurdin & Peacock, are up by 36 per cent.

He said: "The group is on track to achieve all its main objectives, including increased earnings and debt reduction in 1997 and 1998."

"In food distribution, the integration of the Nurdin & Peacock cash and carry business is proceeding... as planned. We are initially reviewing the future of cash-and-carry depots in 13 locations."

Jay Kay, of Jamiroquai, sold a million copies of *Travelling Without Moving* in Japan

Sony hits wrong note over profits

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN TOKYO

SONY MUSIC, the recording company of Michael Jackson and Bruce Springsteen, blamed a lack of big hits for a 33 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £280 billion yen (£63 million) in the year to March 31.

The record company, affiliated to Sony Corp, the electronics group, suffered a 10 per cent decline in sales to ¥103.1 billion.

Sony has invested heavily in new artists, particularly in Japan, a market that accounts for more than half of the company's business. Japanese artists such as Jody and Mary, Puffy and Dreams Come True have been well received. Sales of records by home-grown artists eased 6.5 per cent but that compared favourably with a 12.2 per cent decline in sales of music by non-Japanese music, despite the popularity of some of its artists, such as Celine Dion and Janis Joplin.

Classical music sales increased steadily.

In the financial year to 1998, Sony forecasts pre-tax profit of ¥145 billion on revenue of ¥255.6 billion.

Sony's custom manufacturing division was the only product group that reported an increase in sales in 1996-97. Net sales rose 4.1 per cent mainly because of robust demand for CD-Roms for software used in PlayStation, Sony Computer Entertainment's hit home video game machine.

PowerGen in £150m project with Siemens

POWERGEN, the UK electricity generation company, and Siemens, the German industrial group, have agreed to build and operate a £150 million development centre in Britain to test and demonstrate gas turbine technology in a commercial combined-cycle power plant. The joint venture, announced yesterday, clears the way for the construction of the Cottam Development Centre at the site of PowerGen's existing Cottam power station in Nottinghamshire.

The new facility, which will have capacity up to 500 megawatts, will test plant through prolonged demonstration runs rather than brief test-bed trials. Work will start this month and will create up to 500 construction jobs. When completed the centre will employ up to 50 staff. The venture comes after Department of Trade and Industry agreement to build a 24-kilometre gas pipeline from Cottam to the national gas transmission system at Blyborough, Lincolnshire.

Ruling on Renault site

THE Court of Appeal in Versailles has ruled that Renault, the car maker, must call a meeting of its European works council representing employees before it can close its Vilvoorde plant in Belgium. Renault had appealed against a ruling by a Nanterre court that it had not followed proper procedures in deciding to shut Vilvoorde. Unions had applied to the Nanterre court. Renault had planned to close Vilvoorde at the end of July. The plant employs 3,100 staff.

Grant merger denied

BURN STEWART, the distillers, said there are no talks in progress that might lead to a merger with William Grant. In a statement responding to speculation, Burn Stewart said: "There has been a trading relationship between the two companies which goes back for many years and this is expected to continue. Some months ago the possibility of a closer relationship was contemplated, but these talks were not taken any further." Shares in Burn Stewart slipped 1p to 59p.

EIB backs film project

THE European Investment Bank, the lending arm of the European Union, is lending 71 million euros to PolyGram to help it to produce European films. ING Bank will underwrite the project, the EIB said. Sir Brian Urwin, the EIB president, said: "This is the first time the EIB has financed the film industry." The EIB said that the money would be used by PolyGram to shoot films predominantly within the EU aimed at a family audience.

HTV licence plea

HTV GROUP, the television broadcaster for Wales and the West of England, collected 100,000 signatures for a petition to the Independent Television Commission to publish its licence renewal and to ensure that Channel 3 licence renewal is on an individual basis. Louis Sherwood, group chairman, told HTV's annual meeting yesterday that the group is to be able to plan accurately for the next period it was essential to know precisely what the licence renewal would be.

SeaCon forecast

SEA CONTAINERS, the London-based owner of Great North Eastern Railway, expects to double its earnings this year. James Sherwood, SeaCon's founder and president, said in the company's annual report that profits from its container activities should hit a £24.5 million record. Overall, the group's forecast operating profits for 1997 of £96.2 million, up from £66.7 million. That should, he said, double last year's earnings per share of 73p.

BAA seeks Asia-Pacific hub

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

BAA, the UK airport operator, yesterday unveiled plans to own a string of airports throughout the Asia-Pacific region after its successful joint venture bid for Australia's Melbourne airport for A\$1.31 billion (about £617 million).

The Australian Government confirmed yesterday that the BAA-led consortium, known as Australia Pacific Airports, had been awarded a 50-year lease to run Melbourne's Tullamarine airport as part of the first

tranche of its airport privatisation programme.

Andrew Jurenko, the consortium's chief executive said: "Australia Pacific Airports is focused on becoming the leading airport operator in the Asia-Pacific. The purchase of Tullamarine provides the perfect platform to launch our airport business in the region. We are already in negotiations in Bali and looking at other acquisitions in the region."

Under the deal Australia Pacific Airports, which also includes AMP and Axiom, the Australian fund managers, has agreed to reduce aeronautical charges at Melbourne by at least 18.5 per cent over the next five years.

The Australian Government also announced the sale of Brisbane airport to a consortium headed by Amsterdam's Schiphol airport for A\$1.39 billion and Perth airport to a consortium led by Airport Group Holdings for A\$643 million. Two other British-led groups, headed by Manchester airport and National Express, had hoped to secure one of the airports, but failed to make it past the shortlist.

Prices paid for the three airports far exceeded the market's initial expectations of just A\$2 billion for the sale of all 23 airports in Australia. The Australian Government plans to sell the remaining airports in batches over the next year.

When there's no smoking gun

Rik Workman looks at how fraud leaves only a lengthy paper trail

Fraud is a crime unlike any other. There is usually no witness who "saw" what happened, no smoking gun, no getaway car — just mountains of paperwork and endless lists of bank account transactions to sift through.

These days, money is diverted, moved or hidden on the signing of a document and the press of a computer key. For each transaction, there is a mass of paper generated to evidence it. Any corrupt individual with a desktop PC can manufacture credible documentary evidence. If that individual can then persuade colleagues to join him, there is a risk of serious fraud. If they can get customers to join the scam, fraud is almost unstoppable.

Abbas Gokal, the BCCI fraudster who is due to be sentenced today, was such an individual. As chairman of the Gulf shipping group, he was the key figure in a deep-rooted and well-camouflaged conspiracy with BCCI to steal money from the bank's depositors and to con Price Waterhouse, its auditors. He was the largest borrower from BCCI and, together with the bank, deceived PW in a systematic manner.

Gokal relied upon a raft of his senior managers to lend credence to his deceptions and was prepared to mislead a number of more junior em-

ployees as to the purposes for which their signatures on documents were required. BCCI itself had its own "factory" dedicated solely to the production of false documents. A case perhaps of job creation at its most extreme! In the latter days of fraud, staff were physically collapsing under the strain of having to create so much paper and juggle millions of dollars in fictitious transactions. Fraud can seriously damage your health.

Together Gokal and BCCI moved money in circles around the world, from bank account to bank account, all the time seeking to convince the world that both BCCI and Gulf were profitable and solid.

My colleagues and I discovered that money arriving in many of these Gulf accounts originated from other bogus Gulf accounts, and our task was to prove this. This demanded banking and corporate documentation from many different banks in a number of international jurisdictions. The loss or destruction of documents, or the inability to acquire them from certain difficult territories can frustrate the tracing of the money and render the evidential value of that particular line of investigation worthless.

Many of Mr Gokal's private bank accounts were held in Switzerland. That country's well-publicised bank secrecy



Rik Workman says the BCCI case offers lessons

laws may have encouraged the belief that such sources can prove impenetrable to even the most determined fraud investigator. But our experience was quite the reverse: we had excellent co-operation from the authorities there.

We benefited, in particular, from the Swiss legal obligation for banks to keep their detailed records on individual transactions for a period of ten years. This is in stark contrast to the situation in Britain. Although money laundering

regulations now require supporting records to be kept for five years, our case preceded the introduction of these, and we found that many of the supporting details of the transactions on those statements that we required had been destroyed.

Guidance notes that explain the relevant regulations are not mandatory for authorised banks and their retention policies on original documents appear to be determined largely by commercial considerations, such as the costs of storage and microfilming.

Andersens acquires international accent

THE success of Andersen Worldwide is little short of phenomenal. In 1993, when Jim Wadia was appointed managing partner at Arthur Andersen in the UK, it posted global revenues of \$6 billion. Now, with Wadia on the threshold of running the worldwide organisation, it has managed almost \$6 billion of revenue just in the six months to the end of February.

It is hard for people outside the organisation to grasp the scale of what is going on. It is not that Andersen is secretive. It is more that it is a determined organisation that sticks close to the business culture of its US roots in Chicago. And that culture says it is dynamic but self-contained. As Wadia once said of his partners: "You couldn't find a more individualistic bunch and they have a freedom to express themselves within a culture that is second nature to them. It becomes an instinct."

So it was that last week a high proportion of Andersen Worldwide's 2,700 partners were in Paris to decide on the future. The issues were simple. Larry Weinbach, Andersen Worldwide's chief executive, is standing down at the end of July. So there was a vacancy at the very top to be sorted out. And then there was the organisation itself. Since 1989 Andersen Worldwide has consisted of two separate units: Arthur Andersen, the original accounting and business organisation, and Andersen Consulting. And the strains and stresses that led to the separation in 1989 are tougher these days. Arthur Andersen has more partners and more votes than Andersen Consulting. But Andersen Consulting is growing fastest and a year ago finally overtook its parent company. And the growth differential continues. In the six months to February Andersen Consulting's revenue grew 25 per cent. Arthur Andersen's grew 12 per cent.

Also Arthur Andersen, once simply an accounting firm, is now into an ever-widening range of professional services and in some areas trades heavily on Andersen Consulting's turf. George Shaheen, the head of Consulting, complains about this in good homespun American fashion. "It's difficult for two brothers to date the same girl," is how he once summed it up.

So Paris was the culmination of a long and much fought-over campaign to find a structural way forward. Plans for splitting the organisation into further separate business units had been banded about over the months before. But in Paris the instinct of culture first,

organisation second, held sway. The proposal to hold everything together drew 93 per cent support from partners. When they see consensus, partners tend to close ranks. But what that doesn't take away is the tensions. So the focus switched to the question of who should lead the firm when Weinbach steps down.

The processes within a partnership differ to those of the blunt and public world of companies. In Andersen's vast partners elect a nomination committee with equal representation from the two organisations. It takes soundings and recommends a slate of partners. The board considers these and recommends one name to the partnership. A two-thirds vote is required to appoint the new supreme.

Burt Parisi, partner and partner elect, rather differently, favoured that Shaheen, the head of Andersen Consulting, was on the slate. But so was Jim Wadia, Arthur Andersen's UK managing partner. The partners had elected Shaheen as an "informal" vote on the basis of his stature with the partners.

Parisi's platform drew support at 60 per cent. Wadia's a lesser 60 per cent. The board promptly put Wadia forward as the chosen one. Rumours abound that Shaheen would resign. The rumours were swiftly denied. The majority could support either man "and that is what's important," said a spokesman. But the choice of Wadia is both an upset and farsighted. He will be the first non-American to run Andersen. But he is the man they need. His roots are unconventional. He is a Parsi, born in Bombay, educated in Geneva, married to a Frenchwoman, international and calm. He qualified first as a barrister, then moved to the small firm of

Chalmers Impey to qualify as an accountant, and then moved to Andersen as a tax expert. His style is simple and uncluttered. He talks to people, gets their views, takes a decision and gets on to the next issue. He made his name in the tax practice through clear analysis. On one occasion he noticed that a disproportionate number of multinational companies were operating out of Sweden, but none of the big accounting firms had a specialist partner on site to handle the work. He appointed one on short notice. In August Wadia will be in command. But in reality it is the Andersen culture that will win again and keep pulling in revenues. The difference is that it will now have a more international accent.



ROBERT BRUCE

Thistle sting

SCOTTISH football supporters are not supposed to spread sweetness and light. But a big-arse press notice this week suggests otherwise. It comes from Sir David Tweedie, chairman of the Accounting Standards Board, and Ron Paterson, his arch-enemy from Ernst & Young. Tweedie once described Paterson's attack on the ASB's statement of principles as hav-

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Paterson. "I acknowledge that Falkirk deserve to be ranked with the all-time greats, such as Real Madrid, Juventus and Maryhill Juniors."

Wrong target

JOHN ANDREWS is an esteemed tax partner at Coopers & Lybrand. He will shortly take over as the president of

the Chartered Institute of Taxation. So it is all the stranger that the firm of Kingston Smith should send him a mailshot on tax. The personal letter, addressed to him at the institute, includes the helpful statement: "I enclose a leaflet which will assist in deciding if self-assessment will affect you." Time to cleanse that mailing list.

Going rates

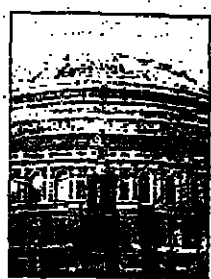
THIS year's annual accounts of the English ICA, published today, show the pay of Andrew Colquhoun, chief executive for the first time. Anthea Rose, chief executive of the certified accountants, received bricksbats from members over her £108,000 pay, revealed last year. Now she should argue about catching up. Colquhoun takes home £124,000.

ROBERT BRUCE

Equities at new high as gilts fade

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

| 1997 | 1996 | 1995 | 1994 | 1993 | 1992 | 1991 | 1990 | 1989 | 1988 | 1987 | 1986 | 1985 | 1984 | 1983 | 1982 | 1981 | 1980 | 1979 | 1978 | 1977 | 1976 | 1975 | 1974 | 1973 | 1972 | 1971 | 1970 | 1969 | 1968 | 1967 | 1966 | 1965 | 1964 | 1963 | 1962 | 1961 | 1960 | 1959 | 1958 | 1957 | 1956 | 1955 | 1954 | 1953 | 1952 | 1951 | 1950 | 1949 | 1948 | 1947 | 1946 | 1945 | 1944 | 1943 | 1942 | 1941 | 1940 | 1939 | 1938 | 1937 | 1936 | 1935 | 1934 | 1933 | 1932 | 1931 | 1930 | 1929 | 1928 | 1927 | 1926 | 1925 | 1924 | 1923 | 1922 | 1921 | 1920 | 1919 | 1918 | 1917 | 1916 | 1915 | 1914 | 1913 | 1912 | 1911 | 1910 | 1909 | 1908 | 1907 | 1906 | 1905 | 1904 | 1903 | 1902 | 1901 | 1900 | 1899 | 1898 | 1897 | 1896 | 1895 | 1894 | 1893 | 1892 | 1891 | 1890 | 1889 | 1888 | 1887 | 1886 | 1885 | 1884 | 1883 | 1882 | 1881 | 1880 | 1879 | 1878 | 1877 | 1876 | 1875 | 1874 | 1873 | 1872 | 1871 | 1870 | 1869 | 1868 | 1867 | 1866 | 1865 | 1864 | 1863 | 1862 | 1861 | 1860 | 1859 | 1858 | 1857 | 1856 | 1855 | 1854 | 1853 | 1852 | 1851 | 1850 | 1849 | 1848 | 1847 | 1846 | 1845 | 1844 | 1843 | 1842 | 1841 | 1840 | 1839 | 1838 | 1837 | 1836 | 1835 | 1834 | 1833 | 1832 | 1831 | 1830 | 1829 | 1828 | 1827 | 1826 | 1825 | 1824 | 1823 | 1822 | 1821 | 1820 | 1819 | 1818 | 1817 | 1816 | 1815 | 1814 | 1813 | 1812 | 1811 | 1810 | 1809 | 1808 | 1807 | 1806 | 1805 | 1804 | 1803 | 1802 | 1801 | 1800 | 1799 | 1798 | 1797 | 1796 | 1795 | 1794 | 1793 | 1792 | 1791 | 1790 | 1789 | 1788 | 1787 | 1786 | 1785 | 1784 | 1783 | 1782 | 1781 | 1780 | 1779 | 1778 | 1777 | 1776 | 1775 | 1774 | 1773 | 1772 | 1771 | 1770 | 1769 | 1768 | 1767 | 1766 | 1765 | 1764 | 1763 | 1762 | 1761 | 1760 | 1759 | 1758 | 1757 | 1756 | 1755 | 1754 | 1753 | 1752 | 1751 | 1750 | 1749 | 1748 | 1747 | 1746 | 1745 | 1744 | 1743 | 1742 | 1741 | 1740 | 1739 | 1738 | 1737 | 1736 | 1735 | 1734 | 1733 | 1732 | 1731 | 1730 | 1729 | 1728 | 1727 | 1726 | 1725 | 1724 | 1723 | 1722 | 1721 | 1720 | 1719 | 1718 | 1717 | 1716 | 1715 | 1714 | 1713 | 1712 | 1711 | 1710 | 1709 | 1708 | 1707 | 1706 | 1705 | 1704 | 1703 | 1702 | 1701 | 1700 | 1699 | 1698 | 1697 | 1696 | 1695 | 1694 | 1693 | 1692 | 1691 | 1690 | 1689 | 1688 | 1687 | 1686 | 1685 | 1684 | 1683 | 1682 | 1681 | 1680 | 1679 | 1678 | 1677 | 1676 | 1675 | 1674 | 1673 | 1672 | 1671 | 1670 | 1669 | 1668 | 1667 | 1666 | 1665 | 1664 | 1663 | 1662 | 1661 | 1660 | 1659 | 1658 | 1657 | 1656 | 1655 | 1654 | 1653 | 1652 | 1651 | 1650 | 1649 | 1648 | 1647 | 1646 | 1645 | 1644 | 1643 | 1642 | 1641 | 1640 | 1639 | 1638 | 1637 | 1636 | 1635 | 1634 | 1633 | 1632 | 1631 | 1630 | 1629 | 1628 | 1627 | 1626 | 1625 | 1624 | 1623 | 1622 | 1621 | 1620 | 1619 | 1618 | 1617 | 1616 | 1615 | 1614 | 1613 | 1612 | 1611 | 1610 | 1609 | 1608 | 1607 | 1606 | 1605 | 1604 | 1603 | 1602 | 1601 | 1600 | 1599 | 1598 | 1597 | 1596 | 1595 | 1594 | 1593 | 1592 | 1591 | 1590 | 1589 | 1588 | 1587 | 1586 | 1585 | 1584 | 1583 | 1582 | 1581 | 1580 | 1579 | 1578 | 1577 | 1576 | 1575 | 1574 | 1573 | 1572 | 1571 | 1570 | 1569 | 1568 | 1567 | 1566 | 1565 | 1564 | 1563 | 1562 | 1561 | 1560 | 1559 | 1558 | 1557 | 1556 | 1555 | 1554 | 1553 | 1552 | 1551 | 1550 | 1549 | 1548 | 1547 | 1546 | 1545 | 1544 | 1543 | 1542 | 1541 | 1540 | 1539 | 1538 | 1537 | 1536 | 1535 | 1534 | 1533 | 1532 | 1531 | 1530 | 1529 | 1528 | 1527 | 1526 | 1525 | 1524 | 1523 | 1522 | 1521 | 1520 | 1519 | 1518 | 1517 | 1516 | 1515 | 1514 | 1513 | 1512 | 1511 | 1510 | 1509 | 1508 | 1507 | 1506 | 1505 | 1504 | 1503 | 1502 | 1501 | 1500 | 1499 | 1498 | 1497 | 1496 | 1495 | 1494 | 1493 | 1492 | 1491 | 1490 | 1489 | 1488 | 1487 | 1486 | 1485 | 1484 | 1483 | 1482 | 1481 | 1480 | 1479 | 1478 | 1477 | 1476 | 1475 | 1474 | 1473 | 1472 | 1471 | 1470 | 1469 | 1468 | 1467 | 1466 | 1465 | 1464 | 1463 | 1462 | 1461 | 1460 | 1459 | 1458 | 1457 | 1456 | 1455 | 1454 | 1453 | 1452 | 1451 | 1450 | 1449 | 1448 | 1447 | 1446 | 1445 | 1444 | 1443 | 1442 | 1441 | 1440 | 1439 | 1438 | 1437 | 1436 | 1435 | 1434 | 1433 | 1432 | 1431 | 1430 | 1429 | 1428 | 1427 | 1426 | 1425 | 1424 | 1423 | 1422 | 1421 | 1420 | 1419 | 1418 | 1417 | 1416 | 1415 | 1414 | 1413 | 1412 | 1411 | 1410 | 1409 | 1408 | 1407 | 1406 | 1405 | 1404 | 1403 | 1402 | 1401 | 1400 | 1399 | 1398 | 1397 | 1396 | 1395 | 1394 | 1393 | 1392 | 1391 | 1390 | 1389 | 1388 | 1387 | 1386 | 1385 | 1384 | 1383 | 1382 | 1381 | 1380 | 1379 | 1378 | 1377 | 1376 | 1375 | 1374 | 1373 | 1372 | 1371 | 1370 | 1369 | 1368 | 1367 | 1366 | 1365 | 1364 | 1363 | 1362 | 1361 | 1360 | 1359 | 1358 | 1357 | 1356 | 1355 | 1354 | 1353 | 1352 | 1351 | 1350 | 1349 | 1348 | 1347 | 1346 | 1345 | 1344 | 1343 | 1342 | 1341 | 1340 | 1339 | 1338 | 1337 | 1336 | 1335 | 1334 | 1333 | 1332 | 1331 | 1330 | 1329 | 1328 | 1327 | 1326 | 1325 | 1324 | 1323 | 1322 | 1321 | 1320 | 1319 | 1318 | 1317 | 1316 | 1315 | 1314 | 1313 | 1312 | 1311 | 1310 | 1309 | 1308 | 1307 | 1306 | 1305 | 1304 | 1303 | 1302 | 1301 | 1300 | 1299 | 1298 | 1297 | 1296 | 1295 | 1294 | 1293 | 1292 | 1291 | 1290 | 1289 | 1288 | 1287 | 1286 | 1285 | 1284 | 1283 | 1282 | 1281 | 1280 | 1279 | 1278 | 1277 | 1276 | 1275 | 1274 | 1273 | 1272 | 1271 | 1270 | 1269 | 1268 | 1267 | 1266 | 1265 | 1264 | 1263 | 1262 | 1261 | 1260 | 1259 | 1258 | 1257 | 1256 | 1255 | 1254 | 1253 | 1252 | 1251 | 1250 | 1249 | 1248 | 1247 | 1246 | 1245 | 1244 | 1243 | 1242 | 1241 | 1240 | 1239 | 1238 | 1237 | 1236 | 1235 | 1234 | 1233 | 1232 | 1231 | 1230 | 1229 | 1228 | 1227 | 1226 | 1225 | 1224 | 1223 | 1222 | 1221 | 1220 | 1219 | 1218 | 1217 | 1216 | 1215 | 1214 | 1213 | 1212 | 1211 | 1210 | 1209 | 1208 | 1207 | 1206 | 1205 | 1204 | 1203 | 1202 | 1201 | 1200 | 1199 | 1198 | 1197 | 1196 | 1195 | 1194 | 1193 | 1192 | 1191 | 1190 | 1189 | 1188 | 1187 | 1186 | 1185 | 1184 | 1183 | 1182 | 1181 | 1180 | 1179 | 1178 | 1177 | 1176 | 1175 | 1174 | 1173 | 1172 | 1171 | 1170 | 1169 | 1168 | 1167 | 1166 | 1165 | 1164 | 1163 | 1162 | 1161 | 1160 | 1159 | 1158 | 1157 | 1156 | 1155 | 1154 | 1153 | 1152 | 1151 | 1150 | 1149 | 1148 | 1147 | 1146 | 1145 | 1144 | 1143 | 1142 | 1141 | 1140 | 1139 | 1138 | 1137 | 1136 | 1135 | 1134 | 1133 | 1132 | 1131 | 1130 | 1129 | 1128 | 1127 | 1126 | 1125 | 1124 | 1123 | 1122 | 1121 | 1120 | 1119 | 1118 | 1117 | 1116 | 1115 | 1114 | 1113 | 1112 | 1111 | 1110 | 1109 | 1108 | 1107 | 1106 | 1105 | 1104 | 1103 | 1102 | 1101 | 1100 | 1099 | 1098 | 1097 | 1096 | 1095 | 1094 | 1093 | 1092 | 1091 | 1090 | 1089 | 1088 | 1087 | 1086 | 1085 | 1084 | 1083 | 1082 | 1081 | 1080 | 1079 | 1078 | 1077 | 1076 | 1075 | 1074 | 1073 | 1072 | 1071 | 1070 | 1069 | 1068 | 1067 | 1066 | 1065 | 1064 | 1063 | 1062 | 1061 | 1060 | 1059 | 1058 | 1057 | 1056 | 1055 | 1054 | 1053 | 1052 | 1051 | 1050 | 1049 | 1048 | 1047 | 1046 | 1045 | 1044 | 1043 | 1042 | 1041 | 1040 | 1039 | 1038 | 1037 | 1036 | 1035 | 1034 | 1033 | 1032 | 1031 | 1030 | 1029 | 1028 | 1027 | 1026 | 1025 | 1024 | 1023 | 1022 | 1021 | 1020 | 1019 | 1018 | 1017 | 1016 | 1015 | 1014 | 1013 | 1012 | 1011 | 1010 | 1009 | 1008 | 1007 | 1006 | 1005 | 1004 | 1003 | 1002 | 1001 | 1000 | 999 | 998 | 997 | 996 | 995 | 994 | 993 | 992 | 991 | 990 | 989 | 988 | 987 | 986 | 985 | 984 | 983 | 982 | 981 | 980 | 979 | 978 | 977 | 976 | 975 | 974 | 973 | 972 | 971 | 970 | 969 | 968 | 967 | 966 | 965 | 964 | 963 | 962 | 961 | 960 | 959 | 958 | 957 | 956 | 955 | 954 | 953 | 952 | 951 | 950 | 949 | 948 | 947 | 946 | 945 | 944 | 943 | 942 | 941 | 940 | 939 | 938 | 937 | 936 | 935 | 934 | 933 | 932 | 931 | 930 | 929 | 928 | 927 | 926 | 925 | 924 | 923 | 922 | 921 | 920 | 919 | 918 | 917 | 916 | 915 | 914 | 913 | 912 | 911 | 910 | 909 | 908 | 907 | 906 | 905 | 904 | 903 | 902 | 901 | 900 | 899 | 898 | 897 | 896 | 895 | 894 | 893 | 892 | 891 | 890 | 889 | 888 | 887 | 886 | 885 | 884 | 883 | 882 | 881 | 880 | 879 | 878 | 877 | 876 | 875 | 874 | 873 | 872 | 871 | 870 | 869 | 868 | 867 | 866 | 865 | 864 | 863 | 862 | 861 | 860 | 859 | 858 | 857 | 856 | 855 | 854 | 853 | 852 | 851 | 850 | 849 | 848 | 847 | 846 | 845 | 844 | 843 | 842 | 841 | 840 | 839 | 838 | 837 | 836 | 835 | 834 | 833 | 832 | 831 | 830 | 829 | 828 | 827 | 826 | 825 | 824 | 823 | 822 | 821 | 820 | 819 | 818 | 817 | 816 | 815 | 814 | 813 | 812 | 811 | 810 | 809 | 808 | 807 | 806 | 805 | 804 | 803 | 802 | 801 | 800 | 799 | 798 | 797 | 796 | 795 | 794 | 793 | 792 | 791 | 790 | 789 | 788 | 787 | 786 | 785 | 784 | 783 | 782 | 781 | 780 | 779 | 778 | 777 | 776 | 775 | 774 | 773 | 772 | 771 | 770 | 769 | 768 | 767 | 766 | 765 | 764 | 763 | 762 | 761 | 760 | 759 | 758 | 757 | 756 | 755 | 754 | 753 | 752 | 751 | 750 | 749 | 748 | 747 | 746 | 745 | 744 | 743 | 742 | 741 | 740 | 739 | 738 | 737 | 736 | 735 | 734 | 733 | 732 | 731 | 730 | 729 | 728 | 727 | 726 | 725 | 724 | 723 | 722 | 721 | 720 | 719 | 718 | 717 | 716 | 715 | 714 | 713 | 712 | 711 | 710 | 709 | 708 | 707 | 706 | 705 | 704 | 703 | 702 | 701 | 700 | 699 | 698 | 697 | 696 | 695 | 694 | 693 | 692 | 691 | 690 | 689 | 688 | 687 | 686 | 685 | 684 | 683 | 682 | 681 | 680 | 679 | 678 | 677 | 676 | 675 | 674 | 673 | 672 | 671 | 670 | 669 | 668 | 667 | 666 | 665 | 664 | 663 | 662 | 661 | 660 | 659 | 658 | 657 | 656 | 655 | 654 | 653 | 652 | 651 | 650 | 649 | 648 | 647 | 646 | 645 | 644 | 643 | 642 | 641 | 640 | 639 | 638 | 637 | 636 | 635 | 634 | 633 | 632 | 631 | 630 | 629 | 628 | 627 | 626 | 625 | 624 | 623 | 622 | 621 | 620 | 619 | 618 | 617 | 616 | 615 | 614 | 613 | 612 | 611 | 610 | 609 | 608 | 607 | 606 | 605</ |
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MUSIC 1

From Tudor motets to Cleo Laine, the Proms range wider still and wider



MUSIC 2

Sir Colin Davis takes a magisterial approach to Brahms and Beethoven

THE TIMES ARTS



POP 1

A triumphant night for the Fugees as they expand their appeal to fill Wembley Arena



POP 2

... and Nanci Griffith gives a tour de force, in a bittersweet vein, at the Olympia in Dublin

MUSIC: A guide to the world's greatest music festival; plus a review of the London Symphony Orchestra in top form

Twenty cheers for the '97 Proms

Most solemn: The Proms traditionally open with something massive, choral and morally improving — notwithstanding a delicious deviation (in every sense) into one of Strauss's more bloodthirsty operas a year or two ago. This season, sublimity is restored. The First Night (Jul 18) sees hundreds of singers and players crammed into the Albert Hall for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, conducted by Bernard Haitink.

Least solemn: Some 73 concerts later, the Last Night (Sept 13) lives up to its eclectic reputation, including Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* (sung by Anne Evans) and Gershwin's *Variations on I Got Rhythm*, to say nothing of silly hats, Union Jacks, and an Irish Reel by Britten.

Lowest: The jubilantly named Ensemble Bash will surely give a thumping good account of percussion music from many different traditions in a late-night Prom (Jul 23). But will it match the decibel count from Robert Wallace's bagpipes, featured in Edward McGuire's *Calgacus* (Aug 18)?

Newest: There are more than 30 premieres this year, from established figures such as Iannis Xenakis, Peter Maxwell Davies, Elliott Carter and Magnus Lindberg, as well as newish names like the American enfant terrible Michael Gordon. He was brought up "in the Nicaraguan jungle" and now writes pieces with titles such as *Yo, Shakespeare* and *Love Bead*. I just hope that all the new works are actually finished on time this year.

Oldest: Written five centuries ago, the *Magnificat* Regale by

More concerts, more premieres, more broadcasts... and Des Lynam hired to complete the introductory CD. The 103rd season of Henry Wood Promenade Concerts will not be short of bulk or innovation. But what of its quality? RICHARD MORRISON identifies 20 superlatives in the 1997 season

Robert Fayrfax is performed by the BBC Singers (Aug 15). Fayrfax was the composer selected by Henry VIII to accompany him to the Field of the Cloth of Gold, where his music was sung by combined French and English choirs. Perhaps some inspirational harmonies might improve the quality of present-day European summits.

Youngest: The number of youth orchestras at the Proms seems to increase each year. Cynics will point out that they are cheap. But let's not be cynical: such ensembles as the National Youth Orchestra (Aug 9), the (mainly East European) Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra (Aug 12), the National Youth Chamber Orchestra (Aug 24) and the European Union Youth Orchestra (Sept 9) are outstanding by any standards. The youngest audience, however, will undoubtedly be the thousands of children packing the Junior Prom on Sept 8 — and next Tuesday *The Times* will run a competition to give away 400 tickets for that.

Sleaziest: Meanwhile, the entertainment on Aug 3 is strictly for adults only. Kurt Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins* and Mahagonny, both scathing satires on decadence and degradation, will be staged — doubtless very saucily — by

Mecklenburgh Opera. The host of Sir Henry Wood will surely turn on its plinth.

Hottest: And after the sinners, a couple of saints. Honegger's wonderful "dramatic tableau", *Joan of Arc at the Stake*, is semi-staged (Jul 27) with the actress Fiona Shaw emoting the main role. I saw her do it at the Brighton Festival, and she generated more electricity than the average power station. Two days later (Jul 29), the Halle Orchestra plays extracts from Debussy's posterously camp but beautiful *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*.

Most authentic: John Eliot Gardiner's interpretation of Beethoven's *Choral Symphony* (Aug 10) with his grandly named Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique won't be the first Prom performance of the Ninth on period instruments. But when Gardiner did it in Salisbury last year he sent the critics into spasms of ecstasy, so this should be a Prom to remember.

Most erotic: I don't suppose that the magnificent players of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra will remove anything more daring than their jackets, but they do conclude their Proms visit (Sept 2-3) with the Dance of the Seven Veils from Strauss's

Salome. Other visiting orchestras include the Kirov (Aug 14), Budapest Festival (Aug 15), Dallas Symphony (Aug 24) and Leipzig Gewandhaus (Aug 27-28).

Most favoured composer: In their anniversary years Brahms, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Korngold all get reasonable deference. But only Britten has a whole weekend devoted to his music (Aug 16-17). It includes the Westminster Abbey Choir singing the lovely *Ceremony of Carols*.

Most relentlessly chirpy performers: I don't really mind the King's Singers skipping from Renaissance madrigals to Lennon and McCartney in one late-night Prom (Jul 31). I just wish they would cut out those silly grins.

Fishest Prom: Extracts from Frank Zappa's *The Yellow Shark* will be performed in a Prom (Jul 20) that otherwise trawls through the shallows of American minimalism. High-brow critics will scoff, but the Albert Hall will be packed.

Funniest: Well, humour is a subjective thing, but *The Gondoliers* is supposed to be comic (Aug 2), and if Gilbert and Sullivan isn't your thing there is always Rossini's farcical opera *Count Ory*, which Glyndebourne forces are semi-staging on Aug 25.

Earthiest: Folk music is a theme running through this season, but nowhere more strongly than in the late-night Prom on Aug 8, when the all-male Rustavi Choir from Georgia offers traditional fare. *Basso* doesn't come more *profundo* than in these great Caucasian choirs: once heard, never forgotten.



This year's Proms include (from left) Solti, Schubert, Britten, Fiona Shaw as St Joan, Haitink, Glennie and Davis

Rarest: Well, have you ever heard Brahms's "heroic cantata" *Rinaldo*? Don't miss it when the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra plays it on Sept 7: it might not reappear in our lifetimes.

Deadliest: It's a great year for Requiem: take your choice from Verdi (Sept 12), Brahms (Sept 10) or Britten (Aug 17).

Jazziest: Hard to believe it, but Cleo Laine and John Dank-

worth are 70 this year. Homage will be paid in a Prom (Aug 29) by the BBC Big Band and Concert Orchestra that includes Ellington and Gershwin classics as well as the premiere of a new Dankworth piece.

Most poignant: Composing his oratorio *Jephtha*, Handel had reached the words "How dark O Lord are Thy decrees, all hid from mortal sight" when his own sight failed. It

was to be his last oratorio — and his finest, say some Handel devotees. Sir Charles Mackerras conducts a top-class cast (Sept 1).

Most virtuosic: Performing at the Proms — with that huge, standing audience packed in just a few feet away — must be the most terrifying assignment in classical music. But great performers rise to the occasion. Watch out for Evelyn Glennie, the amazing percus-

sionist who premieres a new concerto by Jonathan Harvey (Jul 26), Maxim Vengerov, the young Russian superstar violinist who plays Shostakovich on Sept 10, and Evgeny Kissin, the astonishing 25-year-old pianist who gives the first full-length solo Proms recital in 103 years (Aug 10).

• The BBC Proms '97 Guide (£3.99) out this week, has a priority booking form. Booking opens May 21; telephone booking 0171-589 8212 from June 10

Discoveries in great company

BEETHOVEN and Brahms dominated the London Symphony Orchestra's concert on Tuesday, prefaced by the premiere of Piers Hellawell's *Do Not Disturb*. Hellawell's piece is the latest product of the LSO's enterprising programme of commissions: the Finchley Children's Music Group also took part, and the project had been organised by the orchestra's educational "Discovery" department.

Do Not Disturb takes its title from words in *Ways Through Bracken* by the poet Tom Clark, two of whose poems are incorporated. The 15-minute score is nearly symmetrical: the poems are set into the second and fourth movements, around which the orchestra plays a prelude, interlude and postlude. The subject of the poetry, which evokes the lonelier corners of mountain terrain, is the need for solitude. Hellawell responds with dark, "northern" timbres, while restless percussion and scurrying strings supply the sounds of nature's murmuring.

It's all very eco-friendly, and listener-friendly too. But will it be widely performed? It does not help that Hellawell's orchestration is so thick, and it is odd that he should be inconsiderate of children's voices.

CONCERT

LSO/Davis
Barbican

Only confident singing from the FCMG and Colin Davis's careful conducting got the balance right, although very few words came across.

An unforgettable account of Beethoven's Violin Concerto followed, with Anne-Sophie Mutter the soloist. Her big, generous tone was coloured and shaded for intensity. She tore into both cadenzas with extraordinary virtuosity but also heartfelt passion that never contradicted the yearning, quieter poignancy of the rest of her playing.

Brahms's First Symphony is an almost Beethovenian work, and Davis stressed the brooding struggles of the opening movement. His tempos were majestic, even slow, but the performance led towards a finale of red-hot fervour. Both this and the Beethoven, familiar works, sounded newly inspiring. Davis is one of the great conductors of today, and the LSO is one of the great orchestras.

JOHN ALLISON

Street-smart and user-friendly

Any lingering doubts about the ability of hip hop acts to project themselves in an arena environment were swiftly dispelled by Fugees on the first of two nights at this 12,000-capacity venue. Having taken rap to the heart of the pop mainstream with their multi-million selling album *The Score*, the three vocalists from New Jersey have now adapted their street-corner performing style to encompass the stagecraft of a heavy rock act.

Their entrance resembled an SAS operation as Wydel "Clef" Jean swung in from the wings on a rope amid a barrage of exploding fireworks. Strapping on a guitar, he led the backing band — bass, drums and record decks — into an emotionally charged rendition of Bob Marley's *No Woman, No Cry*. The crowd went nuts, and a lot of performers would have settled for such a reaction at the very climax of their set. Fugees were only just beginning.

Prakazrel "Fras" Michel was next to arrive. Swinging in from an elevated section at the back to the soundtrack from *Mission Impossible*, he kept on running, leapt over the lip of the stage and treated the front rows of the

POP

Fugees
Wembley Arena

audience to a hands-on greeting. The pregnant Lauryn "L" Hill, who wisely elected to walk on, then launched into an endearing version of the Jackson Five's *I Want You Back* with words altered

to tell the tale of when Fugees came to London.

With their slick adaptations of hoary pop standards including Bob Dylan's *Knockin' On Heaven's Door* and the inevitable *Killing Me Softly*, they pursued a populist strategy with a single-minded determination that was more Peter, Paul and Mary than Public Enemy.

And yet, shuffling and bouncing around the stage in their baggy clothes and

Timberland boots (minus laces), they maintained credibility with a succession of harder hip hop numbers, interspersed with their trademark "refugee" raps.

They were rewarded with one of the most unequivocal demands for an encore I can remember, and obliged with a nail-hard version of Cowboys. Fugees certainly rocked this house.

DAVID SINCLAIR

Live in the hall of fame

Nanci Griffith
Dublin

fairly low-key fashion before Griffith, in her soft, almost polite vocal style, essayed a multi-lingual version of the song which made her famous in this part of the world. *From a Distance*.

The arrival of special guests the Crickets upped the ante. Normally, when a singer introduces a song by announcing that it was written by the drummer about his first wife, one should make one's excuses and leave. But when the singer is Sonny Curtis, the drummer

J. I. Alison and the song *Peggy Sue*, one has no option but to sit back and marvel. Having led the band through all of Buddy Holly's best-loved songs, Curtis was joined by the Blue Moon Orchestra for a rousing version of his classic, *I Fought the Law*.

After an interval, Griffith was back centre stage, showcasing songs from her new album, *Blue Roses from the Moons*. With songs that are by turns melancholic and buoyant, and performed flawlessly by the finest players around, this show is a tour de force.

NICK KELLY

EN
O

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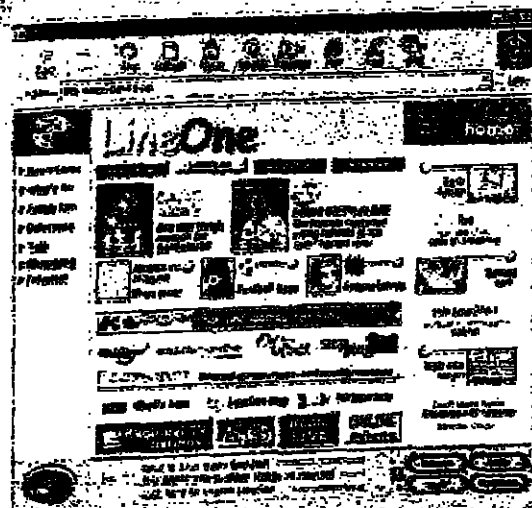
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delivers a mature
and searching
look at disaffected
Japanese youth

Touched by a little genius

CINEMA: Geoff Brown is won
over by the honest charm of an old
man and a young boy in *Kolya*

So where would you like to travel this week? A cardboard cut-out? Mississippi, the Brazilian rainforest, Hollywood's view of 18th-century London, or Prague? Let's go to Prague, a city last seen on international screens as Tom Cruise's playground in *Mission Impossible*. But in the enchanting *Kolya*, winner of this year's Best Foreign Film Oscar, you can experience the city through Czech eyes.

The time is 1969, in the months before the Velvet Revolution. The hero is Louka, a middle-aged musician and ladies' man, who faces a personal crisis. *Kolya* is the crisis. He is a five-year-old Russian boy, the son of a Russian woman who becomes Louka's wife in a paper marriage. When Kolya's mother skedaddles to West Germany, Louka finds himself landed with this bemused urchin, who speaks no Czech. Crusty bachelor meets adorable moppet, no wonder the film was acquired for distribution by Disney.

But there is nothing overly sentimental about this fourth feature from Jan Svěrák, most prominent of the young Czech directors. Certainly it is heart-warming, but every rise in temperature is achieved by careful observation of ordinary life, spry comic timing, and the gentlest humour. For some of these virtues, Svěrák must thank his father Zdeněk, an actor and screenwriter who has often worked with the Czech New Wave veteran Jiří Menzel. As well as writing the script, the elder Svěrák invests Louka with a raggedy charm.

Menzel's own films have suffered from an overdose of bucolic nostalgia: in the 1930s and 1980s it was a way of playing safe. But *Kolya* can afford to be beady-eyed about life under Communist rule. We learn how Louka, a cellist defrocked by the Czech Phil-

harmonic, survives by accompanying funeral services and renovating tombstones. We tangle with the social services, we sense the mutual suspicions of enforced allies, the Russians and Czechs.

At times, Svěrák's direction is almost too relaxed. Until Kolya appears, the film twiddles its thumbs, idling between characters. Later, Svěrák tightens his grip, executing a superbly timed scene on the underground system, where father loses son and feels it. But however tart the director's shots, the film could still have exposed into schmalz with the wrong child actor. Luckily, Andrej Chalimon endears himself without acting cute or crying on cue. *Kolya* deserves all its international success.

But what does *Anaconda* deserve? Guttafuss, mostly, as it tries to scare audiences with an animatronic snake that

sucks the life from most of the cast but leaves Jon Voight free to snarl, flash his evil eyes and chew the Brazilian rainforest. Like 1995's *Congo*, this is a B-movie writ large, which assumes that bursts of high-tech effects will hide an impossible, antique script. They do not.

We begin aboard an Amazon river barge chugging along with a documentary film crew in search of an Indian tribe. Jennifer Lopez is its director; Eric Stoltz is the anthropologist, while Ice Cube wields the camera. Their first mistake is rescuing Voight's adventurer from his stranded boat; their second is letting him steer them towards his secret prey, a 40ft anaconda. Designed by Walt Conti, who engineered the whale in *Free Willy*, it never looks real for a moment.

Most of the cast, at least, show a fighting spirit. Voight takes top honours, serving up the most succulent ham. Stoltz retires wounded early on and spends most of the film below deck. The director, the Peruvian Luis Llosa, is more courageous: he faces up to the film's absurdities, and earns points for bare cheek by mounting a point-of-view shot from the anaconda's throat, looking outwards towards its next

meal. As bad movies go, *Anaconda* is quite enjoyable.

Not so *Ghosts from the Past*. The film aims for such seriousness, such nobility of purpose, as it charts the mission of a white assistant district attorney to reopen the real-life case of Medgar Evers, the Mississippi civil rights leader murdered in 1963. It aches to join *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a conscience-pricking Hollywood classic, the kind that makes white liberals feel better. But *Ghosts* cannot muster the drama, the passion, the humour or sincerity to make the grade.

What it can muster is Alec Baldwin, Hollywood hunk. Not known for playing morally radiant human beings, he is asked to make goodness shine forth from Bobby DeLaughter (pronounced Delawter), the lawyer eager to bring to justice the suspected murderer, a raging racist twice set free by juries 25 years before. Baldwin tries hard, but still looks too much the smiling rascal.

It would help if characters and situations were drawn with more than one dimension, but subtlety and shading are unknown. So is humour.



"He endears himself without acting cute or crying on cue": Andrej Chalimon, the young Russian playing a young Russian in the Oscar-winning *Kolya*

SNAP VERDICT

'Bottom end of the scale'

Every week, young film fans discuss some of the latest releases...

□ **ANACONDA**
Damian Samuels, 19: This forked-tongue-in-cheek adventure film makes the beast in question as scary as a draught-excluder.

Timothy Thornton, 21: Far too many clichés for it to work, even as a comedy.

Leslie Isaiah Thomas, 18: Not the greatest movie in his-story, but I was gripped. Take your main squeeze for company — it's scary.

Sarah Crook, 18: The bottom end of the scale.

□ **GHOSTS FROM THE PAST**

Damian: Little *Big Man* meets *To Kill a Mockingbird* meets *Mississippi Burning* in this gripping drama.

Timothy: James Woods deserved the Oscar nomination, but Whoopi Goldberg was a little out of her depth.

Leslie: The acting was of the highest standard, but director Rob Reiner failed to bring this powerful story to life.

Sarah: Woods gives a cracking performance.

□ **MOLL FLANDERS**

Damian: Rent the video of the television version instead — it's funnier, feistier, and the nudity count is higher.

Timothy: A great cast does well with an average script. Leslie: Jon Lynch gives one of the finest screen performances of the year.

Sarah: An enjoyable romp. Robin Wright really relishes the fun.

Kolya
Curzon Mayfair
12, 105 mins
Enchanting Czech
Oscar winner

Anaconda
Odeon Leicester Square
15, 99 mins
Daft doings in
Brazil's rainforest

Ghosts from the Past
Warner West End
15, 131 mins
Simplistic race
relations drama

Kids Return
ICA Cinema, 107 mins
Thoughtful film from
Takeshi Kitano

Moll Flanders
ABC Shaftesbury Ave
12, 122 mins
Moll becomes dull

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ENCHANTING IN THIS PASSIONATE ADVENTURE"

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There are all kinds of philosophers: some narrowly focused on particular aspects of philosophy, others wide-ranging in their interests; some introverted, others gregarious. Tony Kenny's interests are wide, his disposition sociable. Accordingly this, the second part of his autobiography, is accessible to a wide audience — although a reader interested in the world of ideas will enjoy it most. Even those who are not of a philosophical bent will, however, be engrossed by his insider's account of Oxford from the early 1960s to the late 1980s.

Because he came to philosophy through his training in the scholastic tradition while studying for the priesthood in the Gregorian University in Rome, Tony Kenny's thinking has never been narrowly dominated by the British analytic tradition. He is highly critical, however, of the arid and unintellectual way in which Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophy was taught in the Gregorian, and most of the philosophy that the then absorbed, together with his un-English sense of the genius of

The Master's Last Supper at High Table

Garret FitzGerald

A LIFE IN OXFORD
By Anthony Kenny
John Murray, £20
ISBN 0 7195 5061 0

Thomas Aquinas, came paradoxically from his theological studies at that institution.

The issues he has tackled in a lifetime of research and publication have been extensive — ranging from such topics as God's existence, faith, and free will, to specific moral issues like nuclear deterrence and the definition of murder.

He addressed the latter subject after taking Bar Examinations late in life, conscious of the danger that failure in these tests might well have provoked the headline: "Master of Balliol flunks elementary examination". Typically, he

remarks that one of the advantages of being a law student around 1980 was that in that capacity he received the circulars of the National Union of Students "and thus became privy to whatever mischief was brewing against Vice-Chancellors and Heads of Oxbridge Houses".

In 1978 he visited Czechoslovakia with his wife Nancy in support of the philosopher-dissident Professor Julius Tomin. A seminar on Aristotle in Tomin's flat was broken up by the secret police. Nancy and he, after interrogation in police headquarters — where he was berated for talking philosophy with a "group of criminals" — were taken to the border and left to find their way, carrying their baggage, across a valley to a German frontier post. These events became something of a *cause célèbre* at the time.

His reflections on the morality of nuclear deterrence led him in his



Kenny: warm-hearted

book on *The Logic of Deterrence* to the uncompromising conclusion that, whatever the merits of a nuclear deterrent that would not be used as an alternative to surrender, if someone arguing for the deterrent "says and means that 'you must go right in and use it if it ever comes to the crunch'... then I

can only tell him, quite soberly, that he is a man with murder in his heart."

Kenny recounts that on one occasion when seated next to Caspar Weinberger, then US Secretary of Defense, at an Oxford Union dinner, he apologised for having become heated on this subject, adding that "if you have the power to destroy the world, you must expect people to get excited when talking to you". "But perhaps," Weinberger replied, "I have the power to save it too." Not since the Last Supper, Tony Kenny remarks, had such a claim been made over the dinner table.

When Roy Jenkins succeeded Harold Macmillan as Chancellor of Oxford, Tony Kenny and myself were amongst his honorees. While he was an obvious choice for the Chancellor's list, I felt that my own inclusion owed something to the rejection by the Congregation of the University of an earlier

proposal to honour Margaret Thatcher. As I found when I went over the incoming Chancellor's honorees back to 1904, almost every outstanding British politician of the century was included at one time or another. But in the light of the incumbent Prime Minister's earlier rejection by the Congregation of the University, Roy Jenkins clearly could not include her name on his list — nor could he very well honour other British politicians. And that, I feel, was how I came in, as the next best thing to a British politician!

Ireland is indebted to Tony Kenny for his generous interest in the Northern Ireland problem which he has demonstrated by his involvement in the British-Irish Association and by his Vice-Chairmanship of the unofficial Kilbrandon Commission, which studied and reported on the work of the New Ireland Forum. The Commission rightly crit-

cised the biased historical section of the Forum Report — which my party and others had to concede to Fianna Fail as the price of getting Agreement on the conclusions. But Kilbrandon nevertheless concluded that while joint authority of the two Governments over Northern Ireland was impracticable, the joint authority proposal nevertheless contained ideas that were worth pursuing. As a result its publication in November 1984, when the negotiations for the Anglo-Irish agreement of the following year were moving into a difficult stage, helped to create a climate in which the problems created by Margaret Thatcher's "Out, out, out" press conference a couple of weeks after its publication, were eventually overcome.

Tony Kenny's subsequent book, *The Road to Hillsborough*, demonstrated his sustained interest in and concern for the problem of Northern Ireland.

A Life in Oxford is an attractive account of an important part of the life of an English intellectual — a man with wide interests and a warm heart.

Bearing mute witness

Michael Arditti

THE DUMB HOUSE
By John Burnside
Cape, £9.99
ISBN 0 224 04317 0

GIVEN that empathy is the essence of fiction, it comes as a shock to encounter a protagonist so detached from conventional responses that he regards other people as objects, of interest only to the extent that they relate to him. That shock is intensified when he narrates his own story with intelligence and a sensitivity to language. Such was the case with Tarquin Winsor in John Burnside's *The Dumb House* and it is repeated in John Burnside's debut novel, *The Dumb House*.

The novel's unnamed narrator is obsessed with the function of language: its ability to give shape and meaning to the universe. Inspired by the Persian myth of Akbar the Great, who filled a palace (the Dumb House) with newborn children, attended only by mutes, in an attempt to find whether speech was intrinsic, he sets out to discover the secrets of language.

He regards himself as a scientist "wholly dedicated to the experiment", but, from his first encounter with a strangely docile woman whom he violates and her silent son whom he assaults, it is clear that his objectivity is compromised. He compares himself to da Vinci or Vesalius, but, when he subjects his own twins to deprivation and violence, he steps closer to the Dr Knox who employed Burke and Hare.

Burnside makes no attempt to explain his protagonist's psychopathy, although it is undoubtedly connected with his dead mother, for whom he has a Norman Bates-like obsession. She encouraged his morbid tendencies by showing him the corpses of animals and his inhuman detachment by telling him the story of the Dumb House. Her abiding presence and the rituals he performs at her death recall Ian McEwan.

This is a demanding novel, as single-minded in its prose as in its narrator's purposes. From the first paragraph, it is evident that words are to be Burnside's theme as much as his medium. He skillfully exposes the limitations of language while asserting the power of fiction to reveal what lies behind speech.



Who's a cheeky monkey?

Alain de Botton vocalises his praise of a novelist who satirises the human race with chimpunity

GREAT APES
By Will Self
Bloomsbury £14.99
ISBN 0 7475 2867 0

for his canvas of the King's Cross fire, and who leads a riotous life, taking copious quantities of drugs and alcohol. After a particularly heavy night at Soho's Sealink Club (a wink at the Groucho), Simon wakes up in bed with more than just a hang-over. Something isn't right, for his girlfriend Sarah has grown rather hirsute overnight. She is also letting out a few grunts. In fact, as Simon realises to his horror, she has become a chimpanzee.

Not that Sarah thinks anything of this. Everyone is a chimpanzee, she tells him; when Simon looks outside, the streets are filled with chimps

going about their business. They're swinging from trees, copulating in parks and inspecting each other's rears in the street. When Simon says it's all crazy, he is quickly declared insane, and a medical team carry him off to Charing Cross Hospital where he is kept in a secure room. There he is put into the care of an affable chimp psychiatrist called

Zach Busner, who teaches him to come to terms with his own chimpiness. Simon gradually accepts that he isn't human, that this is merely a delusion caused by damage to brain tissue, and that the chimp way of life is the best there is.

It is to Self's credit that this satire should end up as more than an intellectual conceit. The book's charm lies in part in the obvious delight Self takes in reinventing our world along chimp lines. First there is chimp vocabulary: the apes speak of someone having chimpunity (humanity), when they lose their temper, they go humanshit (apeshit),

while on chimp television, Anton Moshchup and Lloyd Grosschup host a popular cookery programme. Sex never lasts more than a few minutes, incest is the greatest treat for the kids, and being allowed to sniff someone's anus is a privilege. In Regent's Park we see Sloane chimp mothers "vocalise to one another with the extended grunts of their class" while a slap-up breakfast consists of a bowl of well-chewed sloe berries.

Of course, as in the best satires, this journey through the alien world of chimps is at heart a deeply serious (and even moving) call for us to reconsider the shortcomings of the human world. Self's achievement is to show us how we might all benefit from getting in touch with the chimp inside us.

Caught fast in the net

Sadie Plant

HARD, SOFT AND WET
The Digital Generation Comes of Age
By Melanie McGrath
HarperCollins, £16.99
ISBN 0 00 255586 7

THE engaging record of Melanie McGrath's explorations of digital culture, *Hard, Soft and Wet*, is at once a romance, a cultural commentary, and a piece of travel writing which adds the virtual world to its itinerary as though it were a new place on the map. Spanning several countries and detailing relationships with a wealth of characters — including Nancy, Nancy's friend Clare, Daniel the DJ, not to mention the two Macs (one a computer, the other a young man) — this is also a personal account of intense friendships and emotions. McGrath writes with an intimacy which might well feel gratuitous if it weren't for the perverse extent to which the Net itself seems to demand such confidential tones. E-mail and on-line conversation can be far more intimate than face-to-face exchanges between best friends. E-mail is described as "an imperfect form of telepathy".



Embracing virtuality

This is a story in which everything grows up, old, or at least used to the digital world. What begins as an alien culture, young and seductive, becomes familiar, routine, and far more diverse by the end of the book. First waves of enthusiasm give way to the reflective waters in which this book so elegantly swims.

As the Net and computers come of age, McGrath sees herself growing up as well. It is a compelling parallel, and McGrath is perfectly poised to record the unique qualities of this slice of history. But there are times when it also runs the risk of reducing a decade of technological and cultural change to a tale of personal growth and development.

When she draws her conclusions in Singapore, McGrath discovers that what appeared to be her quest for the future was more of a search for eternal youth, an attempt to keep the realities of adult life at bay. All of which is immensely plausible, but far less engaging than the astute portrayals of people, conversations, and encounters which give this book its edge.

Sadie Plant's *Zeros and Ones: Unraveling the Culture of the Future* will be published in August by Fourth Estate.

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Despite the ravages of war Vietnam can be lovable, says Jonathan Mirsky

Of Mae and Ho

As in everything Gavin Young has written — when he was a star at *The Observer* in its great days and in wonderful books like *Slow Boats to China* and *In Search of Conrad* — *A Wavering Grace* brings the atmosphere of Vietnam so near that you can almost taste and smell it. As usual, too, this memoir of a Vietnamese family Mr Young loved over many years and of the country he has the courage to call "lovable" contains many good little stories and in this case one unbeatable one.

In 1965 Mr Young, who had reported the war in Vietnam for three years, interrupted an interview in New York with Mae West, then in her seventies, to rush back to Vietnam to cover the battle for Hue, the imperial Vietnamese capital. Shaken by the destruction of the city, he returned to New York and Mae West. Hearing he'd just been in "Vietnam", she said: "I used to know someone very very important there... His name was — uh — let's see — Ho... Ho... Ho something."

Mr Young was staggered but Ms West told him: "You'd better believe it... I never lie." During the Twenties, she went on, she was starring in her

A WAVERING GRACE
A Vietnamese Family in War and Peace
By Gavin Young
Viking, £17.99
ISBN 0 670 86400 0

own London show. Sex, and staying at the Carlton. Now it is known that Ho Chi Minh was working as a scullion in that hotel and at that time (not under the name Ho, but never mind). "There was this waiter, cook. I don't know what he was. I know he had the slickest eyes, though. We met in the corridor. We — well... She left things there. Her voice trailed off in a husky sigh..."

During his almost 30 years in and out of Vietnam Mr Young became a virtual member of a family dominated by the cultivated, brave, and nearly indestructible Mme Ngo Thi Bong, whose husband died fighting the French; one of her boys died fighting the Communists and she went to "comb a remote battlefield for chunks of her son to scoop into a plastic bag and carry home." Mme Bong and Mr Young (who helped some of the family to escape to the

United States) watched Vietnam, "like a rare and beautiful butterfly", crushed between the two sides. But Mr Young observed that: "The boisterous American presence hid Vietnam like a crude curtain. The true Vietnam slid by unnoticed if one was not careful; but the movement and colour of this gorgeous country remained." He contemplates ending his days in a delta village "where the rice fields stretch away... like a shining emerald counterpane", among "these loving, adorable people... my favourites in the world."

This is the sentimental Mr Young — and why not? There is also Mr Young, the war reporter, holding a dying Vietnamese soldier in his arms whose chest has been torn open by a shell fragment. Mr Young presses his own hand "to the warm liquid mass where his stomach had been." The boy says "hurt me," and soon dies. "I remember feeling this was the end of everything. There was nothing else to do... one might as well stay here for ever."

He got up instead and eventually gave us this delicate, terrible, and enchanting book.



Portrait at the Perfume Pagoda: from Mitch Epstein's *Vietnam: A Book of Changes* (W. W. Norton, £25)

Far from the finish line

John Maddox
wonders whether
scientific ends might
not be simply
new beginnings

John Horgan is an intelligent and reflective writer for *Scientific American*; his book is intelligent but perverse. The title, *The End of Science*, is the message. The method appears to have been to interview people, not always scientists, who are uncertain where science will go from here, weaving their opinions into an argument implicitly. Horgan supposes a future free from big surprises. But the supposition is not exclusively implicit: writing of the problem of telling how life began on the surface of the Earth, he says that if living things were discovered on other planets, "we would have to think again". It will be interesting to see how long delayed the rethink will be.

I must declare an interest. I have spent a long time — my publishers would say too long a time — writing a book called *What Remains to be Discovered*. The starting-point, the state of science now, is much the same, but the conclusions are quite the opposite. I conclude (and do believe) that, far from being near its end, science is only just beginning. How is it that two people can reach such different conclusions from essentially the same material?

Each of us notes, for example, that the decade at the end of the 19th century was a

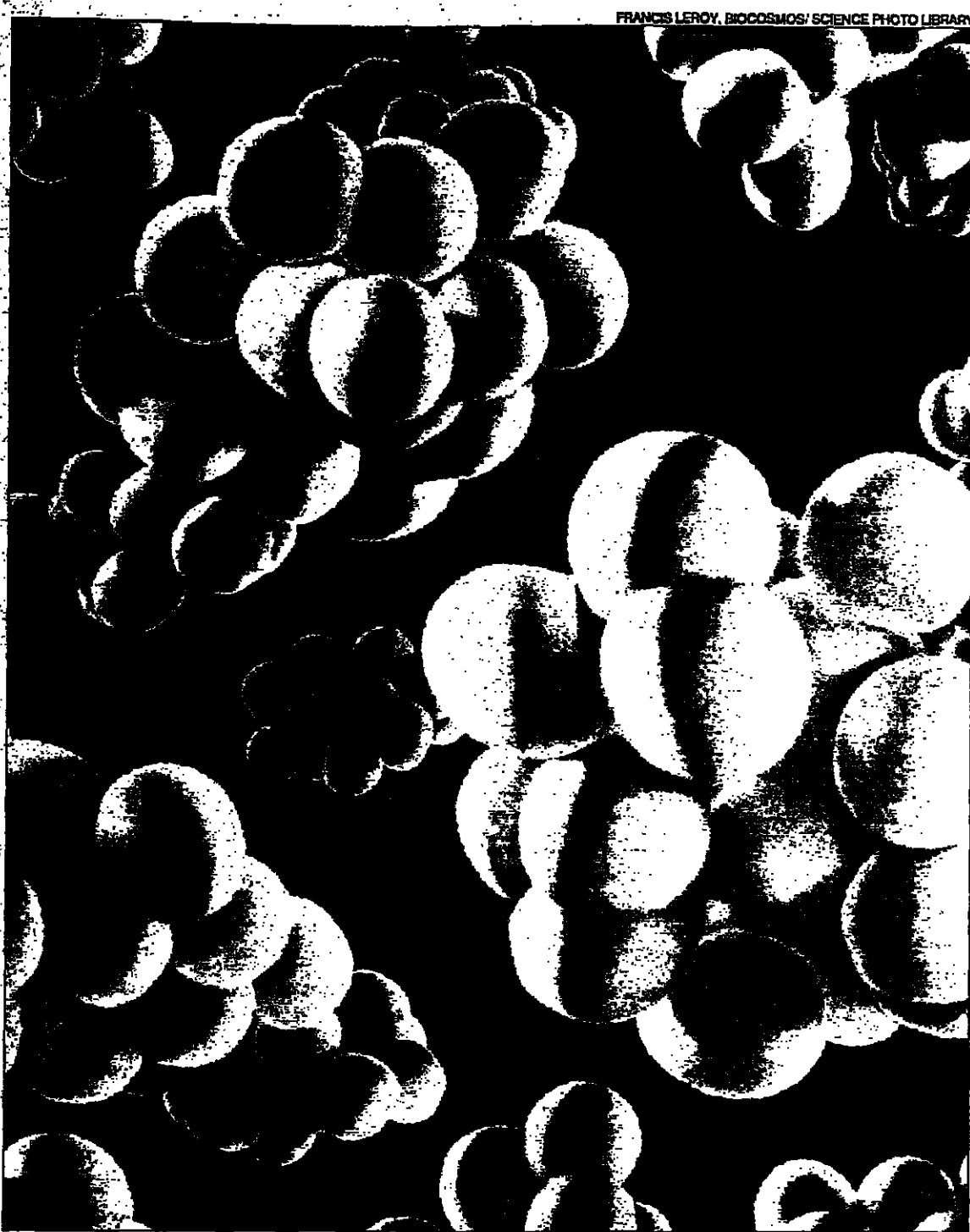
THE END OF SCIENCE

By John Horgan
Little, Brown, £18.99
ISBN 0 316 64052 2

previous occasion when the practitioners of science believed that everything worth doing had been done. There were a few unexplained phenomena — X-rays (discovered in 1895), radioactivity (the following year) and the electron (in 1897) — but nobody seriously believed that any one of these contradictions could undermine the great enterprise of mechanics founded by Newton more than two centuries earlier. Yet by 1925 it was all gone, buried beneath Einstein's two theories of relativity and the communal development of quantum mechanics, which is the most penetrating (and successful) theory of how matter moves yet devised.

Horgan's failure, in my opinion, is that he hardly lifts a finger to catalogue the contradictions or lacunae now apparent in science's scheme of things. The dark spots may at present be clouds on the horizon of contentment, too bigger than a man's hand, but who can tell that none of them will prove subversive? One, for example, is that it has not yet proved possible to devise a quantum theory of gravity. That is important because you cannot otherwise claim to understand the earliest phases of the "Big Bang" from which our Universe is supposed to have sprung (but there are other contradictions as well).

Horgan relates that he had the good luck to attend (as a reporter) a meeting in Sweden at which some of those involved with quantum gravity (Stephen Hawking included) talked about solutions to their common problem. Horgan formed the impression that what they were saying was "preposterous" and claims that an anonymous "attender" agreed with him. Plainly he mistook informed speculation for pronouncements of the truth. Whether there is such a thing as final truth is, of course, an open question.



Small discoveries may lead to larger revelations: electron micrograph image of the staphylococcus bacteria

That, I believe, is the essential difference between us. Horgan shares the view that there are such things as the "laws of physics" (or of chemistry, or biology) that, when discovered in their authentic form, will turn the rest of the field concerned into stamp-collecting. My own opinion, sustained by the history of the fields of which Horgan writes and others, is that progress most often consists of asking familiar questions in more penetrating ways. Aristotle, after all, asked some of the questions that later occupied Newton, but only Newton asked them perceptively — and he was then to be superseded by Einstein.

Even in booming molecular biology, the same process is at work. Take the regulation of the activity of genes. For 30 years, this has been one of the central problems. The mechanism was first revealed (as a neat molecular switch) in bacteria, and then found not to apply in other organisms. Then people began identifying small patches of DNA near the genes in higher organisms that seemed to be involved in their regulation. At the outset, each new element was hailed as the vital one; now, when a typical gene may have half a dozen controlling elements, people seem willing to accept that there may be even more of them. That, of course, does not

mean that the hunt for gene regulators is lapsing into chaos, but merely that the mechanism is one that is subtle and probably flexible. Nobody fears that there will be no answer.

Simpler questions about genes raise more intriguing problems. Why, for example, are the genes in higher organisms arranged along the length of a finite stretch of DNA, but those of bacteria arranged on a circular chromosome? And why do people have 46 linear chromosomes while all the great apes have 48? None of this is pointless inquiry, nor is it "ironic science" — Horgan's name for untestable and fanciful theories.

There are many detailed issues to dispute in Horgan's book, but there is one sense in which it is "preposterous" (to use his word). Quantum gravity is a central unsolved problem. So is the understanding of the origin of life. Then there is the business of the evolution of human beings in the past 4.5 million years, from which we shall learn our cultural history. It will be time to write about *The End of Science* when all these questions have been answered — except that science will by then have taken up other goals.

Sir John Maddox, Editor Emeritus of *Nature*, is the author of *What Remains to be Discovered*, to be published by Macmillan early next year.

Elizabeth Buchan on a novel of Parisian secrets

Young life that is altered by beauty

Cut open the best writers and the red blood of the rebel and the risk-taker spurts to the surface. The rebel takes no advice and writes what he wishes, not what is expected. The risk-taker provokes the border between disaster and the necessity of recreating and reinventing each new book's imaginative landscape. Rose Tremain is superb at both.

She is also courageous. In choosing the narrator and the subject matter of *The Way I Found Her*, she took a gamble on her powers of persuasion. A 13-year-old falling in love with his mother's employer during the course of a summer spent in Paris is a situation threaded through with the difficulty of eliciting our sympathy and empathy, not least over the troubling question of sex. She solves it in part by making him clever, precocious and, in the touching, boiled-down verdict lifted from his school report, "a person of resolution".

Lewis's mother, Alice, is a translator. Summoned from Devon to a smart Parisian apartment by the best-selling author of medieval romances, Valentina Cavrilovich, Alice's job is to push the publication schedule ahead. Lewis has come with her to learn French. Her husband, Hugh, uneasy over the state of the marriage, remains in Devon to build a hut in the garden which he imagines will please his wife. From time to time, reports of its progress filter through to Lewis, but they are dim dispatches. For, in Paris, Lewis exists in a condition of intoxicated discovery. He reads Alain-Fournier's *Le Grand Meaulnes* and, later,

THE WAY I FOUND HER

By Rose Tremain
Sinclair-Stevenson, £15.99
ISBN 1 8519 4004 4

Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, works whose central preoccupations offer a subtle commentary on events. There is the city to absorb, and the friendship of Didier, the existentialist who is repairing the roof of the apartment block and who is willing to teach Lewis his secrets. There is also Lewis's confusion and exhilaration as he succumbs to the seduction of Valentina's blonde beauty.

Here, the novel switches into a thrillerish mode. "I like mysteries," Lewis declares. "Unfinished knowledge..." As the weeks pass, there is much that is unexplained: the tone of Valentina's new book, her past, Alice's sudden and prolonged absences, hints that a previous translator



Tremain: magical prose

had died mysteriously, noises from the attic room next to Lewis's.

"It is too soon for you to learn everything," Valentina's mother warns Lewis, but is powerless to prevent his encounter with a trinity of violence, sex and death. Lewis has his own views. "Beauty," he states at the start of the story, "causes alteration... Alteration may frequently result in some accident or other." Since he meets both a beauty and knowledge in a terrible manner, the experience proves to be irredeemable.

This is a novel whose craft is, quite simply, magnificent. Its structures are forged in steel and yet they are built with the lightest of touches. The text is rich in allusion, irony and shimmering resonance. Images of flying, falling and of the bridge crowd Lewis's altered perception as he moves from one state to another. "Mum" turns into a stranger called Alice, the transition between sexual fantasy and the experience is made. His teenage appetite is transmuted into a stronger hunger and, thus, Lewis walks the roofs knowing that roofs are dangerous.

Lewis is not in the mould of the majority of adolescents. Either the reader decides to accept him, or abandon reading. Like the author, he or she must take a risk but will be repaid. *The Way I Found Her* is magical invention of page-turning suspense, of sadness, grief and passion, whose sure and delicate exposure of a sensibility flowering one hot Parisian summer teaches us the price of experience. Do not miss it.

Spirit of Ariel and Caliban

Robert Nye

AUDEN'S PROSE
Volume I: 1926-38
Edited by Edward Mendelson
Faber, £40
ISBN 0 571 17999 5

Ariel's voice is heard in such pieces as *Writing*, a contribution to a book for children: "People write in order to be read. They would like to be read by everybody, and for ever," and "Rhythm is what is expected by one word or another." There is an admirable directness and lack of pretension about such remarks. Caliban sounds in some of the criticism written for T. S. Eliot's magazine *The*

Criterion, where Auden's usual fluency seems throttled by his desire to impress his editor.

On individual writers, Auden is always memorable, especially in the bits of letters quoted in the notes. Dylan Thomas is "exciting up to a point, but I wish I didn't feel the excitement was simply the exhilaration of being very tight". James Reeves is "like Graves but genuine not bogus Graves". As for Spender: "I find the spectacle of Stephen trying to be heterosexual acutely embarrassing."

Auden left instructions to his friends to burn all his letters, but on this evidence a volume of his correspondence must not be long delayed. It is notable that from about 1932, Auden gives as much weight

to religious solutions as to political ones.

What is believed in seems at first less important to the writer than the fact of faith. Communism or Catholicism — he implies that either might do. Isolation is the disease and love the remedy. Gradually a shift comes, with an emphasis on communion, the love-feast, the idea that the early Christians "found real salvation from the lust for self-salvation" in a vision of agape. The progress the prose records is a pilgrim's progress.

And yet, what an artful pilgrim! Behind that face like a wedding cake left out in the rain there was always a mind like a can of queer worms. That line about love got rejected because it was not true enough, the final Auden insisting with perfect orthodoxy that we must love one another and die. The church lost a good bishop when Auden made up his mind to become a poet (at half-past three one afternoon in March, 1923 — see page 332).

What came After Ovid

WHEN James Lasdun and I were compiling our book *After Ovid* — 60 stories from the *Metamorphoses*, done into English by 40 contemporary poets — I experienced a "Darwin moment" of pure awe (Keats's sonnet, *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*) when Ted Hughes's contributions arrived. This was literary history as I had never felt it, before or since.

Standing by the telephone to appease my sense of urgency, I read his 30 or 40 pages right off, and then scribbled a note urging him to go on and do an *Ovid* book all of his own. I claim no particular discernment for saying so, but to my great delight he's done it and it's even better than I first imagined.

The greatest and simplest and most mysterious thing about *Tales from Ovid* is just how comfortable Hughes is with the material. There is no stretching, no embarrassment, no fooling around for the gallery. It's as though Hughes found nothing alien or remote or intractable about *Ovid* at all: not the passing of 2,000 years, not the big mythological system, not the lists as long as your arm of dried-up rivers, hunting dogs or mutinous sailors. Hughes is as broad as *Ovid* and as subtle, as violent and as folksy — and often all at the same time. It is simply a beautiful match.

If there can be such a thing as *poème-fleuve* to match the *roman-fleuve*, it would have to be the *Metamorphoses*. Even excerpted, reduced to the 24 tales that most caught Hughes's imagination, this book is like a river: only water does justice to the *Metamorphoses*, these stories of the comings and goings of the human and the divine, the human and the natural, the polytheistic and the psycho-

logical, the erotic and the catastrophic.

The *metamorphoses* have metamorphosed: either in the form of contributory tales-within-tales, or lesser stories backed up in a sort of dead arm, or just the little almost subliminal swirls of embellishment, often of a watery

Michael Hofmann

TALES FROM OVID
By Ted Hughes
Faber, £14.99
ISBN 0 571 17799 X

character. Newly arrived in the Underworld, Narcissus heads straight for the River Styx to get another look at himself, a pack of hunting dogs "bowed over the landscape"; Pygmalion's "brain swam" as he contemplates the naked form of Galatea.

HUGHES's language is dynamic and forceful, but also quick on its feet. Without being self-advertisingly modern (like Lowell's *Imitations* or Christopher Logue's versions from Homer), he makes a series of well-judged borrowings from the worlds of technology, psychology and — very effectively — comic books: a god may "materialise", poison is "activated" by heat, Juno rises from her throne

"Like a puff of smoke from a volcano".

His chosen medium for *Ovid's* hexameters is free verse. T. S. Eliot once said that no verse is free for the man wanting to do a good job, but up until now I had never felt the truth of that: there was always something lazy or corrupt or inadequate about the idea. Hughes's free verse is a thing of utter wonder: the play of letters and syllables — I think he works more by sound than by rhythm — is exquisitely controlled and thrilling to follow. The meaningless luxury poured on Terentius, whose mind is on incest: "The sun went down. / A royal banquet glittered and steamed. / The guests, replete, slept."

MIDAS's ass's ears wrapped "in a turban superb / As compensation could be." How the word "alive" is synthesized in another line about Pygmalion's Galatea: "Life-size, ivory, as if alive. / Her perfect figure lay in his studio."

In the verse, you hear millennial echoes, ghosts of the alliterative half-line of Anglo-Saxon ("His arms are lean legs.") of Renaissance fluency ("As among vipers the elegance / Of a viper, or a swan's grace among swans.") of modern mixed diction ("Pan is the real thing — the true voice / Of the subterranean") of universal and unclassifiable lyric beauty: "Her running redoubled her beauty. / The ribbon-ties at her ankles / Were the wing-tips of swallows. / The ribbon-ties at her knees / Were the wing-tips of swallows."

Tales from Ovid is the best thing Hughes has done, the most musical English verse since Bunting, the greatest poem of Classical inspiration probably since the *Cantos*. It will live as one of the great works of our century.

Valiant Paladin of two world wars

Alistair Horne

UNDER TWO FLAGS
The Life of Major General Sir Edward Spears
By Max Egmont
Weidenfeld & Nicholson, £25
ISBN 0 297 81340 1

In August 1914, the British and French armies were reeling back in disarray before the Kaiser's onslaught. Few knew precisely what was happening or even where the respective armies were. One who did was a 28-year-old Lieutenant, temporary Captain of the cavalry, Edward Louis Spears, who was attached to General Lanrezac because of his fluency in French.

Spears's contribution in these darkest days of the First World War was reckoned then to have been "the most extraordinary week's work that any British subaltern has ever done", in the words of the author of this admirable biography, Max Egmont, he had simply "saved the British Expeditionary Force."

Wounded four times in the course of his 1914-1918 liaison services, he was rated by Winston Churchill as "indeed a Paladin, worthy to rank with the truest knights of the great days of romance."

In the late Twenties, picked up by his champion to become a right-wing Tory MP, Spears published his own account of the war, entitled *Liaison* 1914. A work responding to French distortions of Britain's role, and therefore one with its own prejudicial bias, it nevertheless remains one of the great



Cause of indigestion? De Gaulle lunches with Spears in 1944, after the flight from Bordeaux

classics of war literature. In the debacle of 1940, Spears was called back to perform a similar function with de Gaulle. They were two men of brilliance, with vast egos and enormous chips on their shoulders. In his later years, Spears liked to relate how he had literally yanked the future leader of France aboard the last plane leaving Bordeaux: this version of the

tale was hotly disputed by de Gaulle's entourage, and it is diplomatically skirted by Max Egmont.

Spears ended his military career heading the British mission to the French Levant, where he set himself up as a kind of latter-day Lawrence, espousing the cause of Arab liberation and gaining the lasting hatred of de Gaulle and the French.

Retired from the Army, and out of politics after a sad final split with Churchill, Spears

went into business where he set himself up, Rhodes-like, at the head of Ashanti Goldfields — finally to be ousted by an even larger ego: Tiny Rowlands.

As a young author, I recall Spears in old age — gratefully — as immensely generous both of his time and hospitality. He provided invaluable material on France for three books, not only on the two world wars but also on the 1870 Siege of Paris, where his French Raffenescue family

were key eye-witnesses. But he was a damaged personality, one that was plagued by self-doubt (not least by an obsession about his supposed Jewish background) and suspicion.

His bi-nationalism left him always the outsider, open to mistrust on both sides of the *manche*. (Typical of how the British cavalry of pre-1914 saw him was the reproach at his keeping a Gallic handkerchief up his sleeve: "no gentleman ever has anything up his sleeve." He often did.) In the Commons he was dubbed, not altogether affectionately, the "Member for Paris".

As well as writing an important slice of contemporary history, Max Egmont provides an excellent psychological study of this highly complex operator: his description of Spears's *menage à trois*, his elopement and then extraordinary unkindness to his brilliant (and physically courageous) American novelist wife, Mary Borden, shows him as the good fiction writer that he also is. I have long hoped that he might now turn his abundant talent to another of history's outstanding minor figures, this time in the context of Second World War liaison, Sir John Wheeler Bennett — almost as interesting as Louis Spears, but a much nicer man.

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BRITISH RED CROSS

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In the charity's fundraising week, Ros Drinkwater looks at how its role and profile is changing to meet the modern demands of Britain

In war and in peace, the group that brings comfort

On a 1991 visit to refugees in Croatia, Michael Whitlam, the then newly appointed Director-General of the British Red Cross, found himself under fire. Stuck in a bunker under mortar bombardment, his response was characteristic. Noting the hour, he decided to capitalise on the PR potential and using the wind-up field telephone, gave Radio 4's *Today* programme an impromptu live interview.

The origins of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement dates back to the battle of Solferino in 1859, when the horror of war so shocked Swiss businessman Jean Henri Dunant he determined to found a volunteer organisation based on his belief in humanitarianism, neutrality and impartiality. Today, with affiliates in 171 countries, both the name and symbol call up an image of

dedicated volunteers in life-threatening conditions in international war zones.

The British Red Cross, with an annual income of more than £90 million, ranks sixth in financial terms, but with a presence in 46 countries, supplies the largest number of staff to the international movement. About 90,000 volunteers, plus 2,700 paid staff, care for people in crisis at home and abroad.

Each of the 86 UK branches has an agreed role within the statutory services' major incident plan, and deploy volunteers to provide pre-planned services such as transporting people away from a scene, as demonstrated at bomb-threatened Aintree, and giving first aid and emotional support.

But despite more than a century of magnificent work, a 1991 market research study described the Red Cross as the "best known, least understood" humanitarian organisation.

ation, its public image that of a worthy, but old-fashioned movement, solid, but hardly exciting. Mr Whitlam was charged with the task of streamlining the organisation and of refocusing its role as an emergency service equipped to deal with the rapidly changing environment.

He says: "Worldwide, the Red Cross is highly respected, the emblem is still the protective emblem, more recognisable even than Coca-Cola or McDonald's, but it is vital to be relevant to what is happening now. Wars are happening differently. There are fewer wars between countries, more breakdowns within countries. So although a country may have signed the Geneva Convention, the different factions within the country don't know what you're talking about when you point out that killing women and children is against the Convention." Work in the UK accounts for

more than 50 per cent of the budget. Under Mr Whitlam, there has been a shift from offering a vast range of services, to a concentration on core services targeting the most vulnerable communities.

"It's not enough for someone to simply want to be a volunteer," Mr Whitlam says. "He or she has to be prepared to train, and train hard, to deliver the highest quality service."

"While we must be prepared for any emergency, we can't have people sitting around doing nothing. The worldwide movement has taken the strategic decision to work with the most vulnerable, both at home and overseas. Here in the UK we've identified five core services. Medical Loan, Transport and Escort, First Aid Duties, Health and Social Care, and Message and Tracing Services, that will ensure that when we're called upon to respond to a major event, we'll have the skills to deliver."



Essential service: volunteers in a specially equipped caravan offer food, clothing and practical advice after a fire

Staying cool under fire

TO THE public, the Red Cross's most prominent role is in administering first aid. At a recent Tina Turner concert, for example, 135 first-aiders, who were on site from dawn until the small hours, treated 1,000 people for complaints ranging from heat exhaustion and sprained ankles to problem pregnancies.

But first aid is merely a part of the Red Cross's work. Volunteers from the organisation play a crucial role in every national emergency, be it natural disasters or the evacuation of populations in the face of terrorist threat. Martin Annis is the assistant emergency planning officer with special responsibility for Fire Victim Support, the Red Cross's newest emergency service.

"Through the Fire Service has a statutory responsibility to rescue people and put out fires, it is not within its brief to meet the needs of the victims," he says. "As with all major incidents, there is a lot of activity that seems to fall between everyone's area of responsibility."

"Previously much cherished systems of support do not exist as strongly as they did. Families are scattered and local communities are not always as supportive as they'd like to be, so people may be left very much to their own devices, not knowing where to turn for help."

The idea of Fire Victim Support was developed in America. Launched in Berkshire in 1993, it now operates in 11 English counties and there are plans to extend it to the rest of Britain by the end of the century.

"When the Fire Service arrives at a fire, firefighters decide what resources are needed," Mr Annis says. "In the case of distressed victims with no one to turn to, they may call out Red Cross volunteers who arrive in a specially adapted motor caravan equipped with clothing, mobile telephone, kitchen and shower, everything necessary to provide practical and emotional support in those all-important first few hours."

"Their job is to move the

victims from the scene of the fire and provide support in a fairly private environment where the victims' needs can be met."

Volunteers undergo 60 hours of training and are selected on the basis of both their emotional and physical strength. In Mr Annis's view, the job calls for an extraordinary degree of dedication.

"Most volunteers have ordinary day jobs — how many people would be prepared to spend all night helping fire victims and then go straight on to work in the morning?" he says.

"As the service is designed to complement existing statutory services, volunteers must also have a life that allows them to be on call from 6pm to 6am, at weekends and on bank holidays."

"Nor is it restricted to fires. At the recent Aintree bomb threat, first-aiders found themselves cut off from their vehicles, so two Fire Victim Support vans helped with the evacuation of 60,000 racegoers."

"A measure of Fire Victim Support's success is the attitude of Fire Services. 'Initially, and quite understandably,

they were not quite sure what to make of it,' Mr Annis says. 'But in four years we've reached the point when we find them actually pressuring Red Cross branches saying, why haven't we got it here? What fire officers have said for years is that they dread the moment when their job is done and they have to leave distressed victims.'

"Apart from providing comfort, volunteers advise on how to go about an insurance claim; should the house be boarded up; can precious possessions be salvaged? Even pets are looked after."

Princess wages war on mines

When Diana, Princess of Wales, provoked controversy during her visit to Angola in January, the Red Cross was not displeased. *Pez Blair* writes.

Its international campaign for the banning of anti-personnel mines was already moving into higher gear. The Princess's public support for a ban helped to raise the profile, worldwide, of an issue that has led to misery for millions.

It is not the only international campaign pushed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and supported by the British Red Cross. The use of children in war is another, as is the deliberate targeting of water-supply systems and the use of blinding weapons.

Long after conflicts cease,

Royal support raises concern over civilians hurt by leftover weapons

men, women and children are dying or being maimed by these indiscriminate explosive devices. Egypt has the most active mines — about 20 to 30 million left over from the Second World War.

For the Red Cross, the problem is massive, and growing. About 25 per cent of all its surgical work throughout the world is related to landmines.

Seventy one countries harbour active landmines. Civilian refugees tend to be most affected. There are an estimated nine million mines in the former Yugoslavia.

At its hospital in Quetta, Pakistan, the ICRC reports

that 23.2 per cent of mine victims, mainly from Afghanistan, are children. Yet perhaps 85 per cent of child victims do not appear in the statistics. They die before they reach hospital.

Britain is among 155 countries supporting a call to outlaw these weapons. Western states have proposed that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva should negotiate a phased ban, starting with exports.

In December, more than 50 governments will meet in Ottawa, aiming to sign a treaty banning anti-personnel mines.



Diana, Princess of Wales, at a minefield in Angola

Geoffrey Dennis, international director of the British Red Cross, says: "Gradually, if you can raise the issue, get large countries to act, then you will begin to solve the problem. But it will take years."

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A helping hand for the vulnerable

Volunteers provide vital services that rarely make the headlines

THE British Red Cross has a primary role to be ready for any national emergency, be it armed conflict or natural disaster. Less well-known are the services providing short-term crisis care in ordinary communities, in particular those deemed to be specially vulnerable: inner-city and rundown areas; and isolated rural communities.

Every year, thousands of individuals in crisis benefit from services delivered by 90,000 trained volunteers in 85 branches in the UK.

The Transport and Escort Service meets the needs of those who cannot get out and about easily, or have difficulty using ordinary transport. Those with impaired mobility are collected from their homes by a volunteer. In the case of a long journey, a network system means the client can be put on a train by one branch, and met by another at the end of the journey.

Home From Hospital helps people to settle back into their own homes after hospital treatment. A volunteer is assigned to prepare the client's home, help with bathing, shopping and meals, provide companionship and generally encourage confidence.

The Domiciliary Respite Care Service is designed to allow carers to take a short break from their responsibilities when they themselves fall ill, or simply need to recharge their batteries, while the Emergency Domiciliary Personal Care Service enables people to stay in their homes when the usual sources of support are unavailable.

The Therapeutic Beauty

Care Service is unique. With emphasis on therapy rather than beauty, treatment can play a large part in aiding a patient's recuperation after an illness by helping their sense of well-being. Four thousand trained volunteers offer a range of services, from cosmetic camouflage to help those suffering from disfigurement, and beauty techniques for the blind, to relaxing massage.

In the case of someone who has recently been bereaved or divorced, a doctor may prescribe a course of treatment as an alternative to drugs.

For those of limited means, the supply of specialist equip-



Home help: the organisation offers support in a crisis

ment can be vital. Medical Loan has deposits around the UK providing wheelchairs, bath seats, commodes, frames and walking sticks. Last December, John arrived at one such depot with a request. His wife Janet was terminally ill with ovarian cancer, the hospital had supplied a child's wheelchair that was totally unsuitable, could they help?

The volunteer told him the last one had gone out. Three days before Christmas, a wheelchair was returned ear-

ly. Remembering John, the volunteer wheeled the chair round to his house. The delight on his face and that of his wife and children is something she will never forget.

On January 3, the chair was returned. Janet had died, aged 26. A message attached said: "Thank you for making our Christmas so happy. For the first time in six months we were able to go out as a family."

ROS DRINKWATER

A multimillion campaign where every penny counts

Supporters come in all sizes, writes Michael Prest

If you see a dapper figure rattling a collecting tin outside Knightsbridge Tube station in London, this week it may well be John Gray.

As director of public affairs for the Red Cross, Mr Gray is in charge of the charity's fundraising and will be joining an army of 100,000 volunteers who hope to raise £2.5 million during the week.

Using the money efficiently is just as important as raising it. The Red Cross is in the throes of a massive reorganisation which Michael Whitlam, the Director General, believes

will streamline its structure, bring it closer to supporters and enable it better to justify the claim to be the world's leading emergency service.

The change, which will convert 53 separate charities into one, is due for completion by the end of next year, with Mr Whitlam empowered to manage the whole organisation.

Making the change has not been easy. Agreement was needed from the branches, the Charity Commissioners, the Privy Council (because the Red Cross is a royal charter body), and the International

Red Cross in Geneva. Despite natural trepidation among the charity's 2,700 staff, few redundancies are expected.

The reorganisation will cost £6 million and Mr Whitlam is confident it will more than pay for itself by the millennium.

With luck, income could nudge £100 million this year. Fundraising and donations contribute about a fifth of the total. Services, such as First Aid at Work, pull in about the same proportion, as do grants and fees. The other two big areas of income are legacies and the 360 Red Cross shops.

Mr Gray has established a network of corporate sponsors, who provide expertise, materials and contacts, as well as cash. There are eight of them — the aim is to have 12 — each providing at least £50,000 a year for three years. The companies include household names such as the supermarket chain Sainsbury's, British Airways and Commercial Union.

The chairman of the corporate sponsors' group is Sir David Barnes, chief executive of Zeneca, the pharmaceuticals company spun off from ICI. Sir David says his company felt it had a responsibility to contribute to the community in other than directly commercial ways. The Red Cross fitted the bill because it was a well-established, non-political charity with a strong international and national presence.

The Red Cross is developing strategies for global fundraising activities and is the



Whitlam: streamlining

first charity to try to earn income from Interlotto, a lottery on the Internet run from Liechtenstein.

Another idea is HelpAd, under which a company with space on its packaging lets a company with a complementary product advertise in that space, with the profits going to the Red Cross. Thus, Anchor Butter advertises on Hovis wrappers, for example. The Red Cross has signed up 70 companies in Britain and expects to earn £1 million from HelpAd this year. Now it wants to extend the idea to other countries.

All of this depends on healthy national and local roots. During its 125th year, the Red Cross set up the 125 Society, a collection of the well-connected, chaired by Angela Rippon, the broadcaster. Each member contributes at least £1,000 a year to the cause and is expected to introduce others. But there is no substitute for the goodwill earned from the 1,200 gardens that will open in aid of the Red Cross in Britain this summer, or the innumerable fairs and jumble sales up and down the land. In the increasingly high-powered world of fundraising, there remains a valued place for the volunteer tin-rattler.

Pat Blair on the international role that cost nine delegates their lives last year

Danger on the front line

It was impossible to cope with firing intravenous drips to hundreds of the hospital's 2,000 patients. A dedicated team was required for a job that takes many medical students months to master.

Help was sought from among the refugees. Next day, two sisters volunteered for training. There was a drawback — the girls were aged only 12 and 13.

But that is how two children fleeing Cambodia's killing fields came to be going from bed to bed, inserting drips into adults and babies alike with a speed and expertise that amazed the British Red Cross doctor.

It was, says Dr Frank Ryding, an example of never underestimating local facilities, or the people. Refugees are not all peasants: many are professionally qualified. Dr Ryding says: "The people who ran away from the Khmer Rouge did so because they were highly educated."

Dr Ryding, 48, an anaes-



Aid in action: supplies being distributed in Armenia in 1995

thetist who has done 13 missions in 17 years — the war zones of Afghanistan, Thailand and Chechnya among them — has been astonished by the refugees with whom he has worked.

But there is also danger and depression. He has seen the surgeon operating beside him

shot dead. In Berbera, northern Somalia, rebels shot half of his patients because they were from other tribes.

Geoffrey Dennis, international director of the British Red Cross, believes the dangers for its overseas "delegates" have grown. Last year, nine delegates died on active

duty, six of them in Chechnya in December. Now, one person in each delegation is appointed solely to review security and be the one to blow the whistle to get out.

It is not only in conflicts and relief work that the British Red Cross international division is active, working through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the federation of national Red Cross or Red Crescent societies in 171 countries.

It currently has 74 British delegates in 32 countries and spends £20.55 million a year on activities that include coordinating with other relief agencies, teaching soldiers and civilians the humanitarian rules of conflict, helping communities to return to normal, for example by restoring water-supply systems, and checking whether prisoners are detained under humane conditions.

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Set a date and save a fortune

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

THE TRAVEL trade's gamble of putting millions of summer holidays for next year on sale before this season has begun has met with mixed success and caused confusion among potential holidaymakers.

Most of the leading tour operators brought their 1998 brochures out at least six weeks earlier than normal in the hope that the post-election euphoria would fuel a holiday-buying boom.

Customers were bewildered by finding brochures in the travel agents for three seasons — this summer, next winter and next summer — all on display at once. Some of the smaller travel agents were openly hostile to the move.

The holiday firms were convinced that the "feed-good" factor would lead to a rush of sales and that the price cuts they have been able to offer because of the strong pound would encourage customers to book now for next year's summer holiday.

"Our research shows that the month of May will break all records for the sale of holidays," says a spokesman

for Thomson Holidays. Up for grabs is the anticipated £21 billion which will be injected into the economy as a result of the sales of building society free shares and other windfalls due to be received by public within the next few months. The tour operators believe between £1 billion and £3 billion of this will be spent on holidays, both for this year and next.

Although about 50,000 holidays were sold by travel agents over the Bank Holiday weekend and during the first half of this week, most had already been earmarked by regular customers who insist on returning to the same resort year after year.

Lynn Poly, Britain's biggest travel agency chain, says that the early bookings have come in from families taking advantage of the discounts and free places for children.

Although most clients were demanding resorts across the Mediterranean, long-haul destinations such as the Dominican Republic and Cancun

in Mexico were also proving particularly popular. Couples already drawing up their wedding plans for summer next year were among those booking early for the Dominican Republic which is now established as the fastest growing destination in the Caribbean.

But despite discounts of at least 10 per cent off all overseas holidays next summer, up to 25 per cent off selected short breaks and "kids go free" offers galore, the reaction from the bulk of customers has been lukewarm.

Going Places says that it took bookings worth £1 million by lunchtime last Friday, but these were mainly from those who had already indicated they would sign on the dotted line as soon as the brochures were published.

Thomson says it sold at least 20,000 holidays on the first day they went on sale. "We have never gone on sale this early before so it will be a number of weeks before we can tell how successful it has been," says a spokesman. "But

by what we can judge so far, long-haul destinations have done quite well with holidays in the Dominican Republic, Florida and Mexico already being snapped up."

First Choice is concentrating on persuading customers to fly from regional airports and at "unsocial" hours by offering an increased discount of £25 per person if they travel at night.

But Thomas Cook says that things are still "relatively quiet" and expects the advanced bookings market for 1998 to be small.

Chris Kirker, chairman of the Association of Independent Tour Operators whose 150 members supply about 20 per cent of all summer package holidays, says that his members will wait until the middle of the summer "or even later" before putting their brochures on sale.

"When all the mass market operators are selling holidays which are indistinguishable from each other it is not surprising that they try to outdo each other by launching early," he says.



Exotic locations: couples are booking for 1998 weddings



Wise words find their mark

Compared with Virgin Airlines boss Richard Branson, Peter Legro is hardly a household name. But his airline, Transavia, is one of the most successful in Europe and he is President of the International Air Carrier Association.

In the industry he is much respected for his forthright opinions, which is why so many executives gathered to hear him speak to the Aviation Club in London last week. Some of what he said deserves a wider audience.

Timekeeping: "The industry," he said, "spends vast sums of money advertising the wonders of flying in our metal tubes when we cannot even guarantee to stick to the timetables we write." Fewer than 20 per cent of flights operate on time and "we are lucky that our passengers do not yet seem to worry about the odd 15 minutes". How long will that tolerance last?

Air traffic control: "The authorities will spend money on beautiful air-conditioned halls and lounges full of shops and casinos for the customers waiting for delayed aircraft. They want tourism, they want the investment, they don't choose to devote the resources," he said.

The Greeks, he explained, are not ready to move into their new air traffic control centre. Italy will be short of 140 air traffic controllers and the French air traffic controllers' three-year pay deal is up for renewal this year — "Enjoy your summer."

Noise: "The authorities on the one hand have given Schiphol a maximum operational capacity of some 44 million passengers a year but on the other hand it will run out of capacity at peak times next summer at only 25 million passengers

because of a package of noise restrictions.

"And I bet those same environmentalists are touring the travel agencies looking for the cheapest fares possible for their holiday in the sun and wondering why we say we cannot afford to match the targets for noise."

Newcomers: Banks are lending money to new startup "flintstone" airlines who pay peanuts to use aircraft inherited from some other failed carrier. "They start flying in a blaze of publicity and then go bust leaving the rest of us with decimated revenues."

Taxes: "Governments must not get the idea that the industry is an easy target." Spain has a new departure tax of 150 pesetas a head to provide better security equipment. But when Majorca opened its new terminal there was no room for the equipment.

Airlines should not be seen as an easy tax target: "What are we paying for?"

Duty free: "If duty free is banned from European Union airports and flights it will put up the cost of holidays by around £10 a head."

Airports: In many states airports "are still getting lousy service from inept individuals working for chaotic management with outdated equipment."

State aid: "In 1996 some \$12 billion of state aid went into five carriers that between them control 35 per cent of Europe's air transport capacity. One third of our industry cannot or will not stand up by itself."

It was all good, powerful stuff from someone who clearly knows — and cares — both about the travel business and about his customers. Let us hope governments, as well as his colleagues, were listening.

Price-war truce may hit fares

By STEVE KEENAN

THE COST of crossing the Channel is set to leap with a price-war truce and the removal of duty-free shopping in 1999, ferry operators say.

The number of ships operating out of Dover — which with the Tunnel account for 70 per cent of all cross Channel passengers — has fallen in 1997. And with approval expected shortly for the merger of P&O and Stena Line operations from Kent ports, more sailings will be cut, reducing capacity and pressure on fares.

Le Shuttle has raised 1997 summer prices for a standard return from £129 to £169 and five-day tickets from £69 to £109.

Stena says the average cost of a Dover-Calais return — including £1 day-trippers — tumbled from £130 in 1994 to just £90 last year.

Bill Dix, managing director of Le Shuttle, says: "Prices are clearly not sufficient and there will be more increases in 1998. When duty-free shopping goes in 1999, there will be fewer day trips and prices may have to go up by 50 per cent to recover the duty-free income."

The ending of tax-free goods will mean a huge loss for cross-Channel operators. One-third of all Dover ferry passengers are now day-trippers, says Stena. Brittany Ferries claims the figure is as high as 54 per cent.

Dover-based ferries generate half of all income from shopping, compared to just 20 per cent on routes from the south-west. Peter Stratton, P&O marketing director, says: "All companies will suffer terribly."

One report estimates 11 ferry routes from the UK will disappear in 1999, along with 25 ships. David Burdon, general sales manager of Stena Line, predicts that in future only six ships will operate out of Dover, compared with ten now.

Dialysis on holidays

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

A TRAVEL company is offering breaks for patients with kidney disease at Butlin's Holiday Worlds. The Dialysis Travel Company (DTC) is pioneering tailor-made holidays for the 7,000 Britons who need to spend five hours on a machine, three times a week. The company was created by David Topham, formerly chief technician at a hospital renal unit. His firm has holiday dialysis centres at Southcoast World in Bognor Regis and Puncost World in Skegness. Three more at Somerwest World in Minehead, Starcoast World in Pwllheli, and Wonderwest World in Ayr are awaiting registration under the Nursing Homes Act.

The holidays cost the same as for any other Butlin's customer. The bill for dialysis is sent to the patient's local health authority.

Britons travelling to the Continent can arrange to get free care in state clinics. Outside the EU, dialysis can be arranged but the cost of between £170 and £200 a session is often prohibitive.

● Dialysis Travel Company, 0181-449 7500

● National Kidney Federation, 6 Stanley Street, Worsley, Manchester M28 9JH. For list of holiday dialysis centres in UK and main foreign resorts, send £1. For Eurodial booklet, covering Europe, send £2.



Jumby Bay, off Antigua, whose owners claim that losses have forced them to close. About 200 British holidaymakers visit the island each year

Judge keeps 'paradise' open

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

ONE of the Caribbean's most exclusive and expensive island resorts has been ordered to remain open for business — even though it does not have any guests.

A judge ruled this week that the privately owned Jumby Bay, off Antigua, whose owners claim that heavy losses have forced them to close, must remain open until a better financial dispute with multimillionaire property owners has been resolved.

Meanwhile, dozens of guests, including many from Britain, have been offered alternative holidays on other Caribbean islands.

The Jumby Bay resort consists of a hotel complex and 38 cottages and suites hidden discreetly around the 300-acre island. There are also a few villas, which are mainly owned by wealthy Americans who can become members of the Jumby Bay Club and use the main hotel facilities free.

The Antiguan owners of the island claim they are losing so much money that they have no choice but to wind up

the club and build about 60 more hotel villas to rent. However, some existing owners who rely on the hotel for their electricity claim that the closure is unnecessary. They have obtained an injunction preventing the club from being wound up.

The hotel was already shut down and guests offered alternative accommodation, but the judge ruled that no further action could be taken until the dispute was settled.

Although 11 British tour operators feature Jumby Bay in their brochures, only about 200 British holidaymakers visit the island each year.

The high cost — about £4,000 per person per week — does not deter the seriously rich. But Jumby Bay is not to everyone's taste.

Antigua suffered terribly from Hurricane Luis in 1995 and Jumby Bay itself was badly hit. The resort was seen by locals and the Government as a drawcard for the world's wealthy.

They were proud of the fact that such celebrities as George Harrison, Ralph Fiennes, Lord Sainsbury, Ken Follert, Meryl Streep, Tom Cruise and Arnold Schwarzenegger were regular visitors, and even boasted that Diana, Princess of Wales, was once turned away.

But this week tour operators such as Abercrombie & Kent, Elegant Resorts, Caribbean Connections and Caribbeans told potential guests that they should go instead to the K Club on Barbuda, Mustique or Cap Jalousie on Anguilla.

Geoffrey Kent, chief executive of Abercrombie & Kent, regarded Jumby Bay as his favourite hideaway. First established as a holiday destination, it was formerly known as Long Island and was taken over by its present owners in 1987, who named it after a playful local spirit.

Now it must remain in limbo at least until next week while the financial wrangle is resolved.

luxury. Egyptian cotton sheets on the beds, thousands of imported trees to provide shade, Michelin-star chefs and hand-picked staff who outnumber guests by three to one.

Central to the transient island community is the Estate House, an English sugar plantation manor that was built in the mid-1700s. Upstairs in the tastefully restored house is a bar known as The Library, where guests can order the most exotic cocktails or rare wines, while others choose to take tea on the veranda.

Water sports of all kinds are included in the price, as is the American game of six-wicket croquet.

There are rare birds, even rarer sheep, hawksbill turtles and some of the finest beaches in the world.

But although honeymooners especially love its privacy and solitude, others find it "artificial" and cut off from the real world.

Now it must remain in limbo at least until next week while the financial wrangle is resolved.

DIY tours beat the rip-off reps

ORGANISED holiday excursions can cost more than three times as much as going by yourself, according to *Holiday Which?*, the consumer magazine, Harvey Elliott writes.

Research shows that holidaymakers can be taken for an expensive ride if they book through a tour operator. An independent excursion from Paris to Versailles, for example, was £26 while an organised tour was £84.

Tour operators take a cut from the price of a trip laid on by a local agency, part of which gets passed on to the rep as commission.

Reps maximise profits by selling excursions and warning visitors of the dangers of independent trips. But as tourists are often hurried around sights, sometimes without a guide, they may be better off going by themselves.

"It is very easy in many places to organise your own trip," says Kim Winter, managing editor of *Holiday Which?* "Local excursions can be good value as they may include food, drink and transport, but for longer trips the experience may well be more rewarding alone."

"Look at guide books, drop into the local tourist office, and pick a different day to the one all the tour operator groups use to avoid the crowds."

Day trips soar in popularity

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

A DAY out at one of Britain's numerous tourist attractions is proving irresistible to families who want to soak up history and culture as well as be entertained.

British Tourist Authority figures show that last year more than 60 per cent of the top tourist attractions reported an increase in visitors.

Legoland, which opened only last year, leapt from nowhere to eighth place in the league table of "paid for" attractions, with 1.4 million people paying up to £15 each to get in. But the most popular destination is still Blackpool Pleasure Beach, attracting 7.5 million people in 1996.

Overall, the number of visitors increased by 3 per cent, with industrial heritage sites such as old factories, farms and steam railways recording well over the average increase.

Alton Towers remains the most popular "paid for" attraction for the fifth year running, with 2.7 million visitors, followed by Madame Tussaud's, the Tower of London and Canterbury Cathedral. Canterbury is fourth in the table of cathedrals and churches, attracting 1.7 million people even though it charges £3 for admission.



Small wonder: Legoland has become the eighth most popular attraction in the UK

Westminster Abbey and York Minster, where entrance is free, attracted 2,500,000 and 2,200,000 respectively. The Tower of London, Windsor Castle and Edinburgh Castle were the most popular historic monuments.

Hampton Court, Kew and the Tropical World at Roundhay Park, Leeds, were

the most popular gardens: the British Museum, the National Gallery and the Tate Gallery the favoured museums, and London, Chester and Edinburgh the most visited zoos.

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway, the Ffestiniog Railway and the Severn Valley Railway each attracted about 200,000 enthusiasts last year, while the top visitor attraction was Cadbury World at

Birmingham, followed by the Old Blacksmith's Shop at Greta Green.

David Quarmbay, the chairman of the British Tourist Authority, says: "New attractions, such as the London Aquarium and Thackray's Medical Museum in Leeds, together with increased investment in established venues, should encourage more days out in 1997."

EQUESTRIANISM: BADMINTON RULE HANDS ADVANTAGE TO BRITISH RIDERS

King eyes crowning glory

BY JENNY MACARTHUR

MARY KING, unbeaten in a three-day event since Burghley last year, leads the list of British riders attempting to halt the formidable overseas challenge at the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials, which begin today in Gloucestershire.

The event, the only four-star competition (the highest international rating) in the world this year, has attracted most of the leading riders, including Mark Todd, of New Zealand, the winner last year, and Bruce Davidson, of the United States, the winner in 1995.

With no obvious favourite — and at least a dozen of the 80 starters well capable of winning the £25,000 first prize — the event is one of the most open for years.

The British, whose last winner was Virginia Leng in 1993, have more than a sporting chance. Because of the record entry, foreign riders have been limited to one horse, while two of the leading British riders — Ian Stark and Leslie Law — are allowed two. The controversial ruling means that some of the sport's top horses, such as Todd's Broadcast News and Blyth Tait's Aspyring, are not among the starters.

King, who since August has won the Burghley, Blenheim and Saumur three-day events in addition to

the British and Scottish Open championships, rides only one horse, Star Appeal, a 12-year-old gelding. They won at Burghley last year and Star Appeal excels in all three phases of the three-day event, but is capable of aberrations.

At Badminton last year, he fell at the first fence, and at Bramham, last June, he ran away when, according to King, "the brakes failed". King, who won in 1992 on King William, is likely to be among the leaders after the dressage. For the cross-country on Saturday, her main concern is controlling the horse. "I need to get him settled enough to really hold him across country so I can ride him accurately," she said.

Stark, the winner in 1986 and 1988, starts as one of the British favourites with Lady Hartington's eye-catching Stanwick Ghost, an 11-year-old thoroughbred. He has had a superb spring, finishing runner-up at Brigstock and third at Belton — two of the main pre-Badminton outings — but he has not proved a lucky horse.

At his first Badminton attempt, in 1994, he fell at The Quarry. Last year, he led after the cross-country but dropped to sixth after the showjumping. At the Olympic Games, he tripped coming out of the water. Stark, 43, who also rides Arakai, attributes his restored confidence in Stanwick Ghost to the

trainer, Lars Sederholm, to whom he turned for help after Atlanta.

Karen Dixon, who suffered a bitter disappointment when her veteran campaigner, Get Smart, 17, was withdrawn last night after being held over in the first horse inspection, will now rely on Too Smart, her Olympic horse.

Too Smart, an 11-year-old gelding, is bold and athletic, but has yet to fulfil his potential. He finished 29th last year after a mistake at the Beaufort Staircase. In Atlanta, where he was in the Great Britain team that finished fifth, he was clear but slow. Dixon's main concern on Saturday will be holding a straight line through the



King: optimistic

more technical of Hugh Thomas's 31 fences.

The other leading British contenders include Law with New Flavour, a talented Irish thoroughbred; William Fox-Pitt on his Olympic horse, Cosmopolitan, who is having his first attempt at a four-star event; and Pippa Funnell, with Bits and Pieces.

Even with one horse apiece, the foreign entry is daunting. The five New Zealand riders read like a who's who of eventing. Todd, a dual Olympic champion, rides Kaven, the winner of Saumur last year; Blyth Tait, the reigning Olympic champion, is on Chesterfield; Vaughn Jefferis, the world champion, is on Bounce; Andrew Nicholson has his Burghley runner-up, Carnoon; and Sally Clark has Squirrel Hill, on which she took silver behind Tait in Atlanta.

The United States has Karen O'Connor, on her Olympic team silver medal-winner, Biko; Dorothy Crowell, on her 1994 world silver medal-winner, Molokai; and Davidson, on his 1995 winner, Eagle Lion.

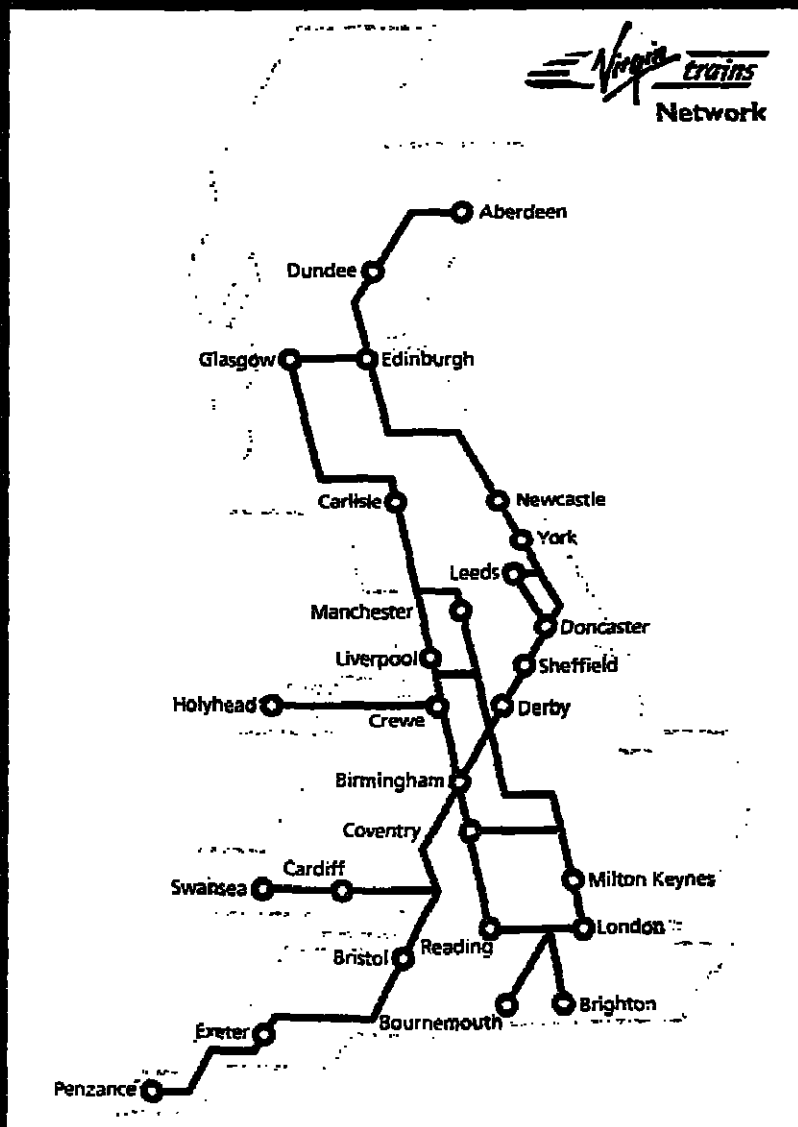
Add to that an Australia squad that includes two members of their Olympic gold medal-winning team — Phillip Dutton, on True Blue Girdwood, and Andrew Hoy, on Darien Powers — and the stage is set for one of the most competitive Badminton in its 48-year history.



In full swing: Kate Rodgers benefited from Tim Henman's expertise at Queen's Club yesterday when the Lawn Tennis Association launched a £3.5 million programme to boost the British game

THE SUNDAY TIMES

VIRGIN TRAINS OFFER ARRIVING SUNDAY.



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RUGBY UNION

Bayfield to miss England's tour

BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

MARTIN BAYFIELD'S playing career is on hold once more. A pelvic condition has recurred and Bayfield, the Northampton lock, who has made only a handful of appearances for his club this season, has been forced to withdraw from the England tour to Argentina, which begins on May 18.

Since John Fowler, the Sale lock, is also expected to withdraw, the team management must find replacements for the engine-room with some speed. They have talked to Nigel Redman, the experienced Bath lock, and considered Dan Grewcock, of Coventry, and Richard West, of Richmond, though the latter has been afflicted by a knee injury in recent weeks.

Richmond, the winners of the second division, have announced plans to bolster both their playing squad and expand their overall sporting interests. They have signed Jason Wright, the Otago centre, along with a crop of promising youngsters in Craig Gillies, the Bath lock, Dominic Chapman, the Harlequins wing, and Lee Best, a full back from Durham. The signing of Barry Williams, the Neath hooker, is expected to be confirmed within days.

In addition, Craig Quinell, the Wales utility forward, has extended his contract until 2001. Quinell, however, will be out of action for two months after an operation on a torn tendon in his left knee and will be unavailable for Wales's summer tour of the United States and Canada.

Ashley Levett, the millionaire who became the club's owner a year ago, hopes to draw other sports around the hub provided by the successful rugby side.

He has bought a controlling interest in Richmond Jaguars, the ambitious third-division basketball team, and also hopes to bring an ice hockey team to the area.

Peter Glanville, the Gloucester flanker, has been named as club captain for next season. His election, as successor to Dave Sims, came after a vote by the players on Tuesday night. Richard Hill, the club's director of rugby, had put three names forward for their consideration.

□ Fran Cotton, the manager of the British Lions, has emerged as president of a new Rugby Football Union (RFU) Reform Group. Ten days before the Lions set off for South Africa, Cotton has repeated his accusations that RFU officials misled the annual meeting last year, and again called on Tony Hallett, its secretary, to resign.

The Reform Group says that, in the past 20 months, the RFU has "mismanaged the transition to open rugby", misled the membership at general meetings... sold out to BSkyB... threatened the five nations' championship and sidelined the democratically elected executive committee chairman, Cliff Brittle. "The group also alleges that the RFU has neglected the sponsorship for clubs outside leagues one and two, leaving them financially exposed."

Erskine ignores injury to secure final reward

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

SALE, already deprived of Charlie Vyvyan, will be without John Fowler, another of their injured forwards, in the Pilkington Cup final against Leicester on Saturday, despite the efforts of a faith healer to repair Fowler's injury.

Fowler is still hoping to make the England tour of Argentina later this month, but damaged knee ligaments, which he sustained two weeks ago, had not recovered sufficiently for him to be considered yesterday for the XV for Twickenham.

Vyvan broke an ankle in the 20-20 draw with Leicester in the Courage Clubs Championship last Saturday, which gave Leicester the last Heineken Cup place for next season at the expense of Sale.

In Vyvyan's absence, John Mitchell, the club's New Zealand director of rugby, switched to No. 8. Neil Aspin moves to blind-side flanker, Mitchell's normal theatre of operation. Despite a broken nose in the game against Leicester, Dave Erskine, Fowler's replacement, has put off an operation and will partner Dave Baldwin in the middle of the lineout.

Compared with Leicester, Sale's strength in depth is limited, but Mitchell last night dismissed suggestions that the draw against Leicester would affect his side on Saturday.

Mitchell said: "Saturday is a totally different game, a one-off situation. I believe that there will be much more emotion shed on this occasion. We were disappointed after last weekend, but this side has got a lot of spirit and intends to do very well."

"I just hope that the referee on Saturday will allow us to deliver quick ruck ball, which was not the case last Saturday. At the end of the day, the game is about scoring tries. It's my philosophy and the southern hemisphere philosophy, and for the game to improve in this part of the world, a ball from the ruck has to become quicker."

"One of Leicester's key attributes for a long time has been slowing it down, and I hope that is not allowed to occur this time."

The European Conference will comprise 32 teams next season, 16 from France, eight from England, four from Wales and one each from Ireland, Italy, Romania and Scotland. Romania will be represented by a Regional XV. The Heineken Cup will comprise four teams from England, France and Wales, three each from Ireland and Scotland and two from Italy.

SALE: J. Mitchell (captain); D. Pass; J. Gwynne; A. Huxley; T. Bain; S. Hurrell; D. Morris; P. Winstanley; S. Thompson; A. Smith; N. Aspin; D. Erskine; D. Baldwin; D. Girdwood; J. Mitchell; P. Gwynne; J. O'Leary; C. Yates; A. Morris; S. Fletcher; L. Hewson; M. Dever.

RACING: OWNER BANKS ON ANOTHER ROODEYE DIVIDEND WITH ROYAL COURT IN ORMONDE STAKES

Sangster aims to scoop treble chance

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

ROBERT SANGSTER'S life-long love affair with Chester could reach historic proportions today as he attempts to complete a clean sweep of the main prizes at the three-day meeting.

The runaway success of Top Cees in the Tote Chester Cup, which came 24 hours after the Sangster sires to success in the Chester Vase, tees up the possibility of a unique treble with the well-fancied Royal Court lining up for today's feature race, the Ormonde Stakes.

Born just down the road from the Roodeye, Sangster is passionate about the city and its tight oval racecourse and

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: TADEO

(3.40 Chester)

Next best: Royal Court

(3.10 Chester)

he is confident about rewriting the record books. "We will win," he said after Top Cees became the first horse since Sea Pigeon to win the Chester Cup a second time.

Nicky Adams attempted to steal the race by kicking Ebbw Vale into a handsome lead shortly after the start, but the stalling handi-capped, but Jimmy Fortune and Top Cees picked up the leader turning for home and stormed clear to win by ten lengths.

"I thought they were going too fast on the very soft ground and my horse travels well. It was only a matter of steering him round there. I was probably the only one that got the trip. Everything else fell in heap at the three-furlong pole," Fortune said.



The winner Top Cees, patiently ridden by Fortune, is plum last as the field sets out on the final circuit of yesterday's Tote Chester Cup

While the first Chester Cup victory by Top Cees, two years ago, was clouded in controversy, yesterday's victory represented a triumph over adversity — much of it self-inflicted by the seven-year-old gelding. His favourite occupation is dumping riders on their backsides before roaring off at speed over the horizon, with little regard to his own safety.

After picking up an injury last autumn, which prevented him running in the Cesare-

with, he performed his favourite trick on his first day back this spring and by the time he had been caught he had ridden a knee. "It has been a chapter of minor nightmares," Lynda Ramsden, trainer of Top Cees, said.

Jack Ramsden, husband of the trainer and one of the shrewdest backers in the land, had been convinced Top Cees would show improved form on soft ground. "Then I chick-

saying he was not certain to get the trip to soft ground. Pretty pathetic isn't it?" he said.

However, one suspects the master punter more than made up for the temporary lapse when Bishop Court justified favouritism with a contemptuous ease in the Roodeye Stakes at Royal Ascot.

Perfect Paradigm's effortless victory in the Cheshire Regiment Handicap produced the inevitable question as to whether the Derby entrant might line up against Entrepreneur. "You boys are getting

desperate for something to take on Entrepreneur," John Gosden said. "I don't think Epsom would be his cup of tea. If he goes for a Derby, it is more likely to be of the Italian or Austrian variety."

The search for a genuine challenger to the Derby favourite should centre on the Michael Seely Glasgow Stakes at York next week, which looks like being the best trial with the likes of Tanassa, Apprehension and Shaya.

Jewel ready to sparkle

CHESTER

CHANNEL 4

2.10: Galloway has high hopes for Be My Wish but her juveniles usually need their first run. Antonia's Double has recorded two respectable efforts but may not relish the soft ground. Bodfordistinction has plenty of speed and should improve after a promising debut effort when fourth to Penelope at Thirsk but the well related Jewel is preferred. She was slowly away at Newmarket but kept on nicely to finish fifth behind Pacifica, and Richard Hannons' runners invariably improve after their debut.

2.40: Barnum Sands will find this going more to his liking after finishing fourth behind Pacifica in the listed Felten Stakes on fast ground at Newmarket. Teofilo, a length second to Hidden Meadow at York last October, lost his maiden tag with ease at Beverley two weeks ago and has been working nicely. However, Barry Hills loves winning this race and Muesalala looks a worthy favourite after beating Handi-capped in a fast-run race at Doncaster, the form of which has worked out well.



Hills: good record

RICHARD EVANS

will favour Royal Court. Peter Chapple-Hyam's lightly-raced half-brother, the 1992 Derby winner, Dr. Devius, will relish a slog through the mud and is reportedly fit enough to make a winning reappearance. Election Day finished second to Oscar Schindler in this race last year and has produced two respectable efforts this term on unsuitably fast ground. He rates the main danger. Water Poet, switched from André Fabre to Godolphin, is bred to appreciate the mud and cannot be ruled out.

3.40: Tadeo is not best in at the weights but saves his best for when the mud is flying. Mark Johnston's tough gelding has plenty of speed, an ideal draw and ran well here last season. That Man Again bounced back to near his best when fourth to Repertory from a moderate draw at Newbury 20 days ago, but all his wins have come on fast ground. Lynda Ramsden's Surprise Mission is still on a winning mark after two wins but is unproven on the soft. Pride Of Britain, a course and distance winner, is well treated at the weights on his seasonal reappearance.



Hills: good record

RICHARD EVANS

HAMILTON PARK

THUNDERER

2.00 Henry Hawk. 2.30 Mamma's Boy. 3.00 All On. 3.30 Fuchies Lad. 4.05 Azeal. 4.35 Kathryn's Pet.

GOING: SOFT (HEAVY IN PLACES) SIS

DRAW: FF, HIGH NUMBERS BEST

2.00 CLOYDE VALLEY HANDICAP

(2,908: 5f 4yd) (11 runners)

1 (1) 0-00 STOLEN KISS 5 (0.0.0.0) M W Eassey 5-10-0 L Lucas 94

2 (2) 0-00 TROOP BEACH (0.0.0.0) J Berry 4-5-0 L Lowther 79

3 (3) 0-00 TROOP BEACH (0.0.0.0) J Berry 4-5-0 L Lowther 79

4 (4) 0-00 TROOP BEACH (0.0.0.0) J Berry 4-5-0 L Lowther 79

5 (5) 0-00 TROOP BEACH (0.0.0.0) J Berry 4-5-0 L Lowther 79

6 (6) 0-00 TROOP BEACH (0.0.0.0) J Berry 4-5-0 L Lowther 79

7 (7) 0-00 TROOP BEACH (0.0.0.0) J Berry 4-5-0 L Lowther 79

8 (8) 0-00 TROOP BEACH (0.0.0.0) J Berry 4-5-0 L Lowther 79

9 (9) 0-00 TROOP BEACH (0.0.0.0) J Berry 4-5-0 L Lowther 79

10 (10) 0-00 TROOP BEACH (0.0.0.0) J Berry 4-5-0 L Lowther 79

11 (11) 0-00 TROOP BEACH (0.0.0.0) J Berry 4-5-0 L Lowther 79

12 (12) 0-00 TROOP BEACH (0.0.0.0) J Berry 4-5-0 L Lowther 79

13 (13) 0-00 TROOP BEACH (0.0.0.0) J Berry 4-5-0 L Lowther 79

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Banks lends himself to action

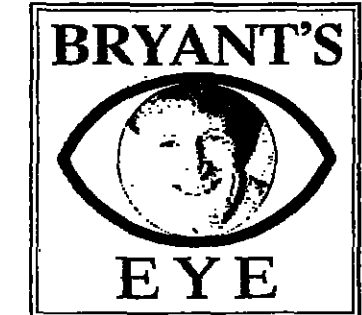
What is the point of a sports minister? That is the question that sport and Tony Banks, must be asking this week. The choice of the lovely boisterous Chelsea supporter, and left-wing MP for Newham North West, as Minister for Sport is one of the more delightful surprises in Tony Blair's new Labour Government.

True to form, Banks bounced in for his first day in office an hour late, wearing denim jeans, and looks certain to bring some much-needed colour to a job that had almost vanished without trace under his low-profile predecessor, Iain Sprouat. Banks is well known as a political maverick and his appointment will delight many who believe that he has a better pedigree than most for the job.

He is fanatical about football and a



The new Minister for Sport is as much a fan as those he represents



devoted follower of Chelsea. He had an excellent track record in supporting the London Marathon while on the Greater London Council. Four years ago, Banks tabled an all-party early day motion calling on the National Heritage Department not to charge the marathon for using its parks.

Banks will also have endeared himself to the paying spectator by railing against the amounts of cash that football clubs have to pay for the policing of games and against the ever-rising cost of tickets. Many, too, will have been encouraged by his constant condemnation of the selling-off of school playing fields and by his passionate campaigning against blood sports.

Those who like to take part in, rather than merely watch, their sport will note that Banks likes to keep in good physical shape. He works out five mornings a week on a multimillion in his cellar at home and said: "There is no excuse for politicians ending up looking like heaps of rubbish. They're not deprived of income, opportunity or knowledge.

so, if they're fat and shapeless, it's probably because of overindulgence." His biggest complaint about his own physique is his lack of height. He is 5ft 7in. "I've always wanted to be taller," he said. "Clothes would hang better and I'd have a much better view at football matches."

One of the greatest benefits to British sport may well be that Banks comes to the post as a recognised member of Labour's awkward squad, ever prepared to make a nuisance of himself and so likely to raise the profile of a job that has proved a backwater for too many of those who have gone before him.

Banks is not a career politician, and

certainly not one to toady to self-styled sporting elites. With his love of football and his empathy for the supporters, he could be the most successful holder of this office since Denis Howell. Howell was the role model for those to follow, but few have matched his rapport with lovers of sport. What a sorry lot most of them were.

The post began back in 1962 when Lord Hailsham persuaded Harold Macmillan that there was a need for a supreme who could lead the development of sport throughout the land. Hailsham's analysis was right, but the trouble is that a dozen sports ministers later we still have not had anyone strong enough in the job.

The pick of the bunch. Howell, served twice as Minister for Sport between 1964 and 1979. The others generally became forgotten men in a graveyard job: Eldon Griffiths, Hector Munro, Neil Macfarlane, Richard Tracey, Colin Moynihan, Sprouat... who remembers their great sporting initiatives today?

One former minister in the Department of the Environment has even said that, when he was put in charge of sport, the world missed it. John Peyton, in his recently-published autobiography, confesses: "I could not even begin to see myself as Minister of Sport, which I regarded as something of a non-job, not far removed from farce... to my great relief the appointment went almost unnoticed." Banks is unlikely to let his appointment go unnoticed. If he is prepared to state his mind, be the voice of the supporter and fitness enthusiast and fight his corner, he might prove a great success.

His immediate agenda for action should be relatively simple: he should set up a decent nationwide coaching structure and reverse the sad decline of sport in our schools. The coaching set-up in this country is pathetic. Up and down the land there are dedicated men and women who give their time and experience for next to nothing. They need support and funding.

Equally pressing is the state of sport in our schools. They have never recovered from the selling-off of playing fields and the disillusionment of many teachers who traditionally supervised games after the school day was over.

The collapse of sport in so many of our state schools has hit at every level. At the elite end there is a dearth of school champions who will be the world-beaters of tomorrow, and at the fitness level there are sad and terrifying reports of unfit and overweight six and seven-year-olds, who are putting their health at risk because of the lack of exercise in their school programme.

What Banks can bring that is new to this job is his high profile, his energy and a lot of lottery cash already earmarked for sport by the outgoing Government.

Banks himself was clearly amazed and delighted to be selected as Minister for Sport. Let us hope that the sporting public will be just as amazed and delighted by the way he plays it.

JOHN BRYANT

GOLF: GERMAN PUTS CONTINENTALS' CASE AS RYDER CUP DOMINATES AGENDA AT THE OXFORDSHIRE

Langer calls for redistribution of wealth

By JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT

IN A Ryder Cup year, it is to be expected that any gathering of professional golfers and officials will be dominated by discussion of that thrilling event. On the eve of the International Open at The

Oxfordshire, however, the first event of the professional year to be staged in Great Britain, the Ryder Cup talk with Severiano Ballesteros, the Europe captain, was not the usual discussion about the likely composition of his team, but rather about an appeal by Bernhard Langer for a more

equitable distribution of the profits from the biennial competition. When Langer talks, it pays to listen. He does not whinge. The way that he has coped with repeated attacks of the yips can only be admired. Now, midway through his 22nd season as a professional, a career the majority of which has been spent in Europe, he is one of the tour's senior statesmen, as well as one of its most respected and most successful.

So, when he says that the Swedish, Irish, German associations and their like should receive money from the Ryder Cup, it is time for the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA), which owns the event and presently splits the estimated £4 million profits with the PGA European Tour, to sit up and take notice.

"Ever since continental players became part of the Ryder Cup, part of the money should go to other PGAs," Langer said. "I have recommended as much to the tour. I don't know whether they will listen to me or not, but all the other continental players think the same. It is common sense and I hope it happens sooner rather than later."

Langer is one of ten of Europe's cup-winning team from the 1995 event at Oak Hill to be competing at The Oxfordshire. The significance of this was explained by Colin Montgomerie. "Although the

Spanish and Italian [opens] had good fields, this is really the start of the European campaign," Montgomerie said. "Everyone is back for it." Of Montgomerie's colleagues in the last Ryder Cup team, only Nick Faldo and Costantino Rocca are missing. One attraction is the amount of money at stake, another that it marks the start of four high-class tournaments, including the PGA, the flagship event of the European Tour, which together offer £3.2 million in prize-money.

Montgomerie has had two weeks off since competing in the United States in the week after the Masters. He returned to Britain, moved house and is raring to go again. "I won't be content if I don't win in the next four events," he said. "I've got to challenge now."

This brought him neatly to

one of the essential paradoxes of the contemporary European Tour. Everything that Montgomerie says suggests that he would be better off competing in the United States, yet every time he says as much, he qualifies it by saying that he will not do so.

"You can only improve in any walk of life if you're competing against players you think are as good if not better than yourself," Montgomerie said. "Europe's leading player over the past four years, said, 'I was doing that in the US and it has got to be good for your game. We in Europe hit the ball better from tee to green, but where the Americans outscore us is in their ability to get up and down from anywhere, possibly because they play on more consistent surfaces — but they do chip and putt phenomenally well."

From that, you might deduce that he is about to move to the United States to sharpen his game in an attempt to win the major championship that he covets. Then he appears to contradict himself: "I am very happy where I am right now and I am not in any mood to threaten that in any way by moving to the US."

One can only conclude that, what would be good for Montgomerie's golf, would be bad for his private life — and perhaps he cannot be blamed for putting his priorities in that order.



Langer: opinion

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 45

BIM

(b) The colloquial name for an inhabitant of Barbados. So *Bimshire* = Barbados. 1902: "Mr Bosanquet's team of English cricketers, which has lately been playing in Barbados, and making but an indifferent show before the doughty Bims."

FUNDI

(a) A West African grass, *Digitaria exilis*, cultivated for its seed, which resembles millet. Hungry rice. The native African name.

AFIKOMAN

(b) Near the beginning of the Jewish Passover service, a piece broken from the second of the three cakes of unleavened bread and put aside to be eaten at the end of the meal.

GOONDA

(b) A job, rascal, rogue or thug. From the Hindi *gunda* a rascal. "Since the parties let their goondas loose in the streets to plunder and terrorise, business has been redeploying itself in safer parts of India."

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MOTOR RALLYING 45

Late charge helps
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SPORT

THURSDAY MAY 8 1997

BRYANT'S EYE 46

Why Tony Banks
is Britain's man
for all seasons



Ferguson believes that his Premiership champions can only get better

United to keep red flag flying

By OLIVER HOLT, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

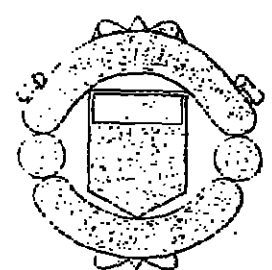
IT WAS quiet at Old Trafford yesterday. The forlorn crowd was full of cars as usual, but there were no party balloons up. The Megastore was almost empty; the Superstore was deserted, too. Only in the gloom of the tunnel that runs beneath the main stand was there any outward sign that Manchester United had just won their fourth championship title in five years.

A small group had gathered there, initially to shelter from the rain that came and went in squalls and then to ask officials whether there was any chance of players appearing to sign autographs. A middle-aged couple, from Glasgow, said the Rangers and Celtic players always showed up at Ibrox and Parkhead respectively after training.

As the rain persisted, however, the knots of supporters turned their attention to a line of posters on the wall, a series of large faces staring out from a black background, each inscribed with one word to encapsulate the seven virtues of Manchester United. And as they stared at them, more people came, as if to form a vigil.

The first in the line, of course, was Eric Cantona. Imagination was his quality. David May was next with Drive. Andy Cole after him with Determination and then Gary Neville with Dedication. Ryan Giggs was the Inspiration, David Beckham had Cheek and Roy Keane, hirsute and moody, was blessed with Power.

When the rain ceased, the crowd dispersed to embark on the last throes of their fruitless search for autographs. By then, the streetwise fans had



been allowed into The Cliff, United's training ground, a few miles away, to laud their heroes.

Cole was the last to leave, pausing to talk to journalists about the new sense of fulfillment he is gaining from his play, before signing the pieces of paper and the pictures thrust in front of him and climbing into his car.

Upstairs, in a modest conference room, Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, who had arrived at The Cliff early to congratulate his staff, was talking about the potential of the team that was handed the FA Carling Premiership by the failure of Newcastle United and

Liverpool to maintain their challenge for the title on Tuesday night.

It has been suggested that this United team, though they have clinched the championship with two games to spare, are not as talented as other Old Trafford incarnations that have dominated English football in the Nineties. Ferguson did not dispute the claim outright, but he did hint that after the "fairy tale" title success with so many young players last year, some of the members of his squad had found it difficult to motivate themselves for run-of-the-mill fixtures this season.

"This team does not have the power of the 1994 team yet, for instance," Ferguson said. "Ince, Robson, Hughes, Bruce, they were so powerful, all of them. You felt they could handle any game physically and it made them really difficult to beat. Sometimes, we went into games thinking we could not be beaten."

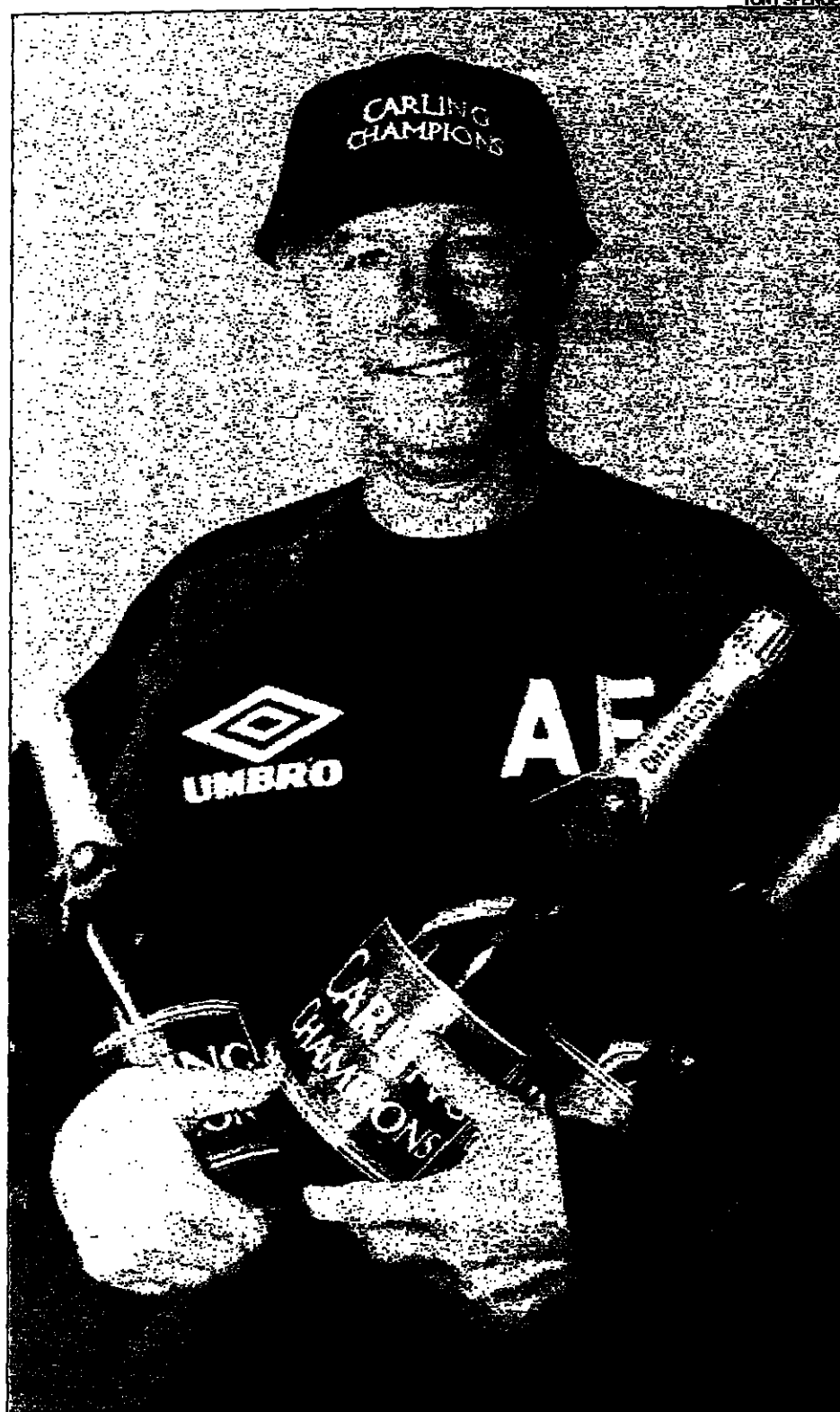
"But this team has got to go through all that. It has its advantages. Someone like Solskjaer is going to improve and improve next year, physically and in other ways. I do think these players will get even better. I don't know how much better until they reach maturity, but some of them could be great players."

"Their tactical awareness is one thing that is already better. But one little problem this season is that we have been focusing on the big games and not the mundane ones. We have got to get back to basics, but when you are winning things you get that happening. We need to focus on it next year."

"I think we can go on to be as dominant as Liverpool were. The young players have showed great mental toughness. They have coped remarkably well and there is no reason why they should not go from strength to strength."

Next year, of course, will be another year in pursuit of the European Cup and Ferguson also praised his players for refusing to let their advancement to the semi-finals this season adversely affect their domestic performances.

Ferguson did not depart, ironically enough, without one final swipe at the Premier League, the organisation that has become synonymous with the rebirth of greatness at Old Trafford, but which refused to grant an extension to the



Champagne moment: Ferguson prepares to celebrate United's title triumph yesterday

season to ease United's fixture congestion. When he spoke, it was as if he had seen the T-shirts draped over a wall outside Upton Park on Tuesday night that proclaimed, "I'd rather be dead than red", or heard the singing of the Newcastle and

West Ham United fans on the tube train on the way back into London, united in their hatred of Old Trafford.

"We stand on our own," Ferguson said. "We have won this without the help of the Premiership because we do not get any support on major

issues. It is not a chip on my shoulder, just recognition that we have done it on our own. There is a terrible amount of jealousy towards Manchester United. I do not know why." Four titles in five years, perhaps, might have something to do with it.

Liverpool put Ince at top of wanted list

By DAVID MADDOCK

WHILE Manchester United launched into a familiar celebration on Tuesday evening, Liverpool were left, once more, to endure the lonely route of recrimination. Their failure to secure the FA Carling Premiership has initiated a swift and decisive response as Roy Evans, the manager, turns his mind to next season.

In the wake of Tuesday's disappointment, when Liverpool lost 2-1 at Wimbledon and thus conceded the title to United, Evans' first act has been to dispatch a representative to Milan in an attempt to secure the signing of Paul Ince. An initial offer was made for the Internazionale and England midfielder two weeks ago that promised to make him the highest-paid player at Anfield. However, Liverpool will not have it all their own way, for Chelsea have also approached Ince, who must now weigh up the respective offers.

He is certain to leave Inter after securing an agreement that his transfer will proceed at a reduced fee. Ince suggested to his Italian club that, if he was priced out of a move back to England, he would remain in Italy for the final year of his contract and then return on a free transfer. The threat has succeeded.

Significantly, the Liverpool manager has said that the players' age presented no problem. "Spending money on a 29-year-old is probably money that you will not get back, but then, under Bosman, it is unlikely that you would get money for any player in the future," Evans said. He hopes to hurry through a deal next week, but Ince may wait until after the FA Cup Final to see if Chelsea, who meet Middlesbrough at Wembley, qualify for Europe.

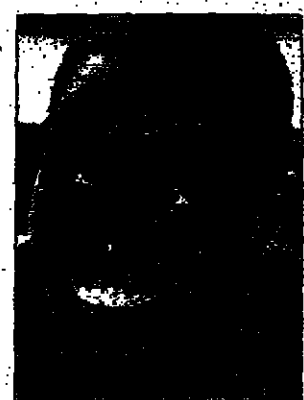
Ince will not be the only target for Liverpool. After an ultimately depressing season, Evans has taken the decision to make fundamental changes at the club. John Barnes could move to a coaching role, with several other players — including Stan Collymore, Phil Babb, Neil Ruddock, Mark Kennedy, Rob Jones and even Patrik Berger — all likely to leave.

That would clear the ground for other signings. Joe Kinnear, the Wimbledon manager, confirmed yesterday that Oyvind Leonhardsen

will be sold in the summer for a fee of £4.5 million. Evans had talks with the Norway international two weeks ago and is likely to conclude a deal after the season is completed. The Liverpool manager may also enjoy success if he pursues interests in Sol Campbell, of Tottenham Hotspur, and Jari Litmanen, the Ajax and Finland forward.

England may lose the services of Robbie Fowler, Darren Anderson and Ian Walker for the summer. Fowler, the Liverpool forward, is to undergo an operation on his adenoids and may miss the summer tournament in France. Anderson and Walker, of Tottenham, are definite non-starters for all England's close-season games — both have been told to rest for six weeks in an effort to clear long-standing injuries.

Ian Wright, the Arsenal



Ince: ultimatum

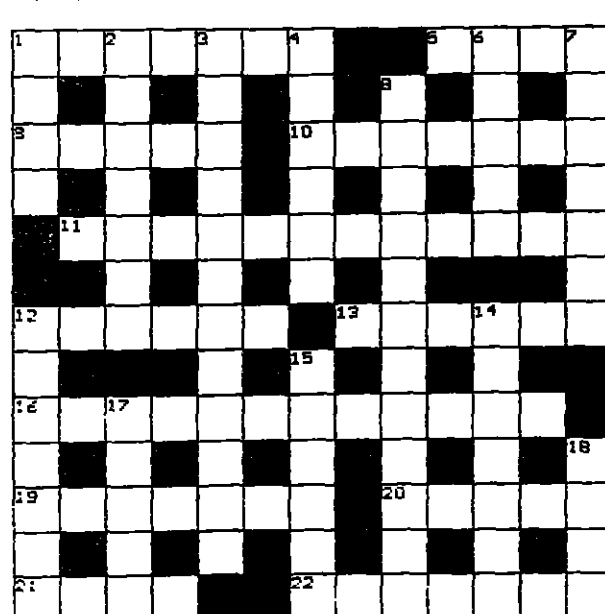
striker, has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association after complaints that he made derisive gestures at spectators and "barged a steward at Coventry City on April 21. He has already been charged by the FA over remarks he made to the referee during Arsenal's draw with Blackburn Rovers two days earlier.

Kevin Davies, the 20-year-old Chesterfield striker, is to join Southampton in a £1 million transfer. Davies was prominent in Chesterfield's giant-killing run to the semi-finals of the FA Cup.

Stuart Pearce is expected to resign as player-manager of Nottingham Forest today. Dave Bassett, the club's general manager, is expected to assume control of team affairs after their relegation from the Premiership.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 1088 in association with BRITISH MIDLAND



- ACROSS
- Gruesome (7)
 - Narrow aperture (4)
 - Distinction, worth (5)
 - Virtuosic display (7)
 - Repeatedly (4,3,5)
 - To slander, traduce (6)
 - Lots of orig. 10,000 (6)
 - Carefree (5,2,5)
 - Bogey, fabulous animal (7)
 - Make reparation (5)
 - Still, regular (4)
 - Touching line (7)
- DOWN
- Act silently: Siegfried's mentor (Wagner) (4)
 - Friendly: a drink (7)
 - Lepidopterist's trap (9,3)
 - (Tide) going out (6)
 - Petrarch's muse (5)
 - (Gun) pointed: (sportsman) prepared (7)
 - Tax-deduction system (3-2-3-4)
 - A wheeled transport (7)
 - Vexatious (7)
 - Tasmania capital (6)
 - Vigorous period: to brief (5)
 - Escape passage: release (feelings) (4)

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11 In touch 13 Langoustine 17 Assuage 19 Abhor 20 Tiger
22 Effects 23 Empower 24 Play
DOWN: 1 Alove 2 Chrysalis 3 Flea in one's ear 4 Angst
5 Tau 6 Catech 7 Mairon 12 Unethical 14 Staffs
15 Sante 16 Frisky 18 Arrow 21 Gap

Robson needs Middlesbrough win

By DAVID MADDOCK

AT LEAST Bryan Robson's dry sense of irony has not deserted him. Reflecting on Middlesbrough's increasingly anxious attempt to avoid relegation from the FA Carling Premiership, he smiled sweetly yesterday and offered a surprising analysis. "It is the most exciting period in our history," he said.

Perhaps soldiers in the trenches offered similar thoughts, for the Middlesbrough manager could be forgiven if he were suffering from a touch of shell shock after the events of recent weeks. Monday's tense 3-3 draw at Old Trafford was

certainly thrilling, but surely not for those involved. The excitement continues tonight at Blackburn Rovers, where Middlesbrough must avoid defeat if they are to maintain any realistic hope of staying up. Even a draw would tip the balance against them.

"Two wins will guarantee league safety and that must be our aim," he said. "We must go for victory in both our remaining matches. We still have some hope if we draw, but six points equals survival and that is the only thing we are concentrating on. No one at this club has even given a second thought about Wembley [and the FA Cup Final]."

A win, or even a draw for

that matter, would ensure safety for Blackburn and leave Middlesbrough searching for victory at Leeds United on Sunday. Knowing that, for them to escape relegation, results involving Coventry City and Sunderland must go their way. At least the North East club received some good news yesterday, when Fabrizio Ravanelli suggested he could be fit to play at Elland Road.

Sepp Blatter, the general secretary of Fifa, football's world governing body, repeated his criticisms yesterday of the size of the Premiership, which has 20 clubs, and the Premier Liga in Spain, which has 22. "They are both far too

big," he said. "It would be much more sensible to have only 16 teams."

Uefa, the European governing body, has argued for an 18-team Premiership, a case that was given unexpected support yesterday in a report by Deloitte and Touche, the management consultancy firm. Presenting the case for a radical restructuring of the Football League, the report said it should comprise 96 clubs "including all from the Vauxhall Conference and, ultimately, two from the Premiership", leaving 18 in the top flight, 24 in the first division, 24 in the second and 24 in each of two regionalised third divisions, north and south.

Lawrence bounces back from brink

James Allen on the return of the bowler who won the battle of wounded knee

THE fast-bowling career of David Lawrence, which seemed to have been cruelly ended by injury while playing for England in New Zealand five years ago, resumed yesterday in a manner that will raise spirits far beyond the boundaries of Gloucestershire.

When Lawrence marked out his run and took the new ball in front of a few disbelieving souls at the County Ground in Bristol, the memory of his contorted features, as he lay with a shattered left knee cap during the Wellington Test match in February 1992, seemed all too vivid.

Five years of retirement, however, have done nothing to diminish his heavyweight swagger and Lawrence, a hugely popular figure known universally as "Syd", wasted little time in reminding the Hampshire batsmen that he is still worthy of respect.

After four overs off a shortish approach, a change of

ends and a lengthening of his run-up to something like the rumble of old brought swift reward for a courageous decision to give first-class cricket another go at the age of 33. It was with unbridled joy that Lawrence and his team-mates greeted Hancock's outstanding catch at fine leg from Lane's top-edged hook. His bounce is in good working order.

"It was a relief more than anything," Lawrence said. "People had written me off, perhaps understandably, because it was a horrific injury, but it just shows what you can do with will-power and determination. It was a big day for me and it has been a long time coming. I've just worked hard at getting my fitness back, but I've only really dreamt about this."

Lawrence's comeback had its genesis in a couple of games at the end of last summer, after several months in which the knee had given him no difficulty. A succession of minor muscular problems as the new season unfolded kept him waiting to pull on a Gloucestershire sweater in a competitive match for the first time in six years. Even yesterday, his appearance was in doubt until an hour before the start. "I've had no treatment on the knee for nine months," he said, "but, as for the rest of my body..."

A huge support now covers the knee and the heavy scars bear witness to the trauma of the last of his five appearances for England. In a premature attempt at a comeback the summer after his

injury, the patella cracked again. His return has taken everybody by surprise, not least those close to him. "Who would have believed it," Jack Russell said. "When I heard that he was thinking about a comeback, I didn't think it was possible."

It was Russell who was keeping wicket on that fateful day in Wellington, as he was yesterday. "He bowled some lively balls on a wicket which did not really suit him," Russell said. "Give him a wicket that is hard and fast and he will be back to his old pace, no doubt about it. It was virtually like the Syd of old."

Lawrence, who had acquired a wine bar in Bristol during his absence from the game, has set himself a target of ten matches and 50 wickets for the season. "I have got to be sensible," he said. "I don't want to let anybody down."

Photograph, page 45
Match reports, pages 44, 45

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